
Mr. Pearse's Last Legacy.

T W O
DISCOURSES,
(VIZ.)

I. A Beam of Divine Glory :

O R,

The Unchangeableness of God Opened,
Vindicated, and Improved.

II. The Soul's Rest in God.

Very useful to quiet the Minds of Christians, when discomposed on the Account of Man's Mortality, and the Mutability of Humane Affairs.

Juan Pearse
By E. P. Author of *The Great Concern* :
Or, *Preparation for Death, &c.*

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THE
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TO THE
READER.

THE Author of this and Two other Treatises, Intituled, *The Best Match*, and *The Great Concern: Or, Preparation for Death*, did in a most Solemn manner (and with an intire Submission to the Divine Will) pray on his Death-Bed, that in as much as his Days were shortened, God would be pleased to give his Blessing to some Writings of his, that they may Preach to, and do Good to the Souls of Men (of which he was a great Lover) when he was dead and gone; and God was pleased to hear his Prayer, as Thousands can witness, into whose Hands his Books are fallen.

This Treatise of the *Unchangeableness of God* may well attend and be reckoned a Second Part, or, Application of his *Book of Death*: For when a Christian is made sad on the Consideration of Man's

Mortality, and the Mutability of all things under the Sun, what can better compose his Thoughts than the serious Contemplation of *God's Unchangeableness*? What is fittest for him to do when his Soul is full of Agitations on the Account of Changes here below, than to take up his *Rest in God*, who is *the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither Shadow of turning*? The Psalmist makes this Use of it; the whole 90th Psalm seems to be Penned on this Account, (to which we refer the Reader) and Part of the 102d Psalm, especially the 11th Verse, where he thus declares his Sense of his Mortality.

My Days are like a Shadow that declineth, and I am withered like Grass.

But in the 21th Verse he thus quiets his Mind, *But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy Remembrance unto all Generations.* As if he should have said, This is our Comfort, tho' we die and fall into the Dust, yet our God is Eternal, *And this is Life Eternal, to know him the only true God, &c.*

That God would be pleased to give the like Success to This as he hath to the former Treatises, is the Prayer of

TO THE
READER.

THE Unchangeableness of God is one of those Perfections of his whereby he is in a peculiar manner distinguished from the Creatures. The Creatures are made up of Changes. Their Beings, Life, Conditions, are subject to many Changes. But God knows none of these Changes, his Being is most immutable, his Life the most even, constant, uniform, serene Life; his Happiness at all times alike and the same. God doth always abide in the same Likeness, *Ἀεὶ μένει ἐν ἑαυτῷ.* says one of the Ancients, Philo Judæus. with him there is no Variableness, nor Shadow of Change. Now there is an Instinct in us whereby we are carried out to desire Unchangeableness. Every thing doth naturally desire its Perfection; Man therefore being a reasonable Creature, finding himself subject to many Changes, longs after a Perfect State, which is to be Unchangeable; he would fain come to an Unchangeable Life, to an Unchangeable Happiness. Now what

To the Reader.

we cannot find or attain unto in our selves, we should aspire after by attaining Union and Conjunction with our Maker. Every thing is made perfect by reaching or attaining its First Cause or Principle. God is the Fountain of Life, the Fountain of Unchangeableness, so far as Unchangeableness is communicable to the Creatures. Indeed, in a strict and proper Sense Unchangeableness is one of the Incommunicable Attributes of God; none but God is simply and absolutely Unchangeable; or can be so. It implies a Contradiction to suppose a Creature, and that Creature intrinsically and in its own Nature not to be under a Possibility of Change; but yet after a sort the Creatures may be made Unchangeable, in having an Unchangeable Life, an Unchangeable Happiness, given to them by some kind of Participation of God, who is the Chief Good, and who hath all Life and Happiness in himself. Thus the Holy Angels, who are not simply and absolutely Unchangeable in themselves, do yet enjoy an Unchangeable Life and Happiness in way of Denation and Communication, by the Sight of God, and Communion with God. We should therefore aspire after the Sight of God, and press after the most perfect Adherence to him. God only is the Centre of Unchangeableness, and by fixing our Hearts in him, we shall, after a sort, become Unchangeable. Joyn thy Heart to Eternity, (says Austin) and thou thy self shalt be Eternal.

The Author of the following Discourses hath now blessed Experience what that Partici-
pated

pated Unchangeableness is, (if we may so call it) which Glorified Souls have in the Divine Presence, by having Communion with God, the First Unchangeable Being. Whilst he lived here on Earth he saw many Changes passing over himself, both as to his Person and Condition; this put him upon the Contemplation of the Unchangeableness of God, and caused him to seek for that Rest in God which he could not find in himself, nor in any thing here below. And as those that observed his Spirit did clearly perceive that he was much quickned and helped, as to his Spiritual Estate, by meditating much of an Holy Rest in God; so it is not to be doubted, if we take the same Course, and keep the Eye of our Minds fix'd on God, labouring to take up all our Rest and Satisfaction in him, there shall we find that true Quiet to our Souls which we vainly seek after in the Variety of Objects here below. And the serious perusing of these Discourses, which carry much of the Impress of the Author's Spirit upon them, may be of good Use to us to help us to attain such an End.

The Author had no Thoughts at first of bringing forth these Sermons unto Publick View, but being much persuaded hereto by his Nearest Relation, at last he yielded unto that Importunity, and perfected them with his own Hand. The rest of his Notes being left in Characters, it is much to be feared these are the last Sermons of his that are like to see the Light.

To the Reader.

For a Close I may only add this, That it is matter of sad Lamentation to us, to consider how many of the Faithful Servants of God, who have been Eminent in their Generations, have been taken away in a few Years. Certainly it becomes us to bewail greatly the Deaths of so many Godly Ministers; and since the Harvest is great, and the Faithful Labourers are but few, we should pray the Lord of the Harvest that he would thrust forth Labourers into the Vineyard.

Thine in the Lord Christ,

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J O H N R O W E.

A

Beam of Divine Glory :

O R,

The Unchangeableness of God, Asserted, Opened, Vindicated, and Improved, from

Mal. 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not ; therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

CHAP. I.

Wherein way is made to the Text, the Words thereof opened, the Foundation of our intended Discourse laid, and the Principal Matters to be considered, in the Prosecution of it, hinted at.

IT is a great, as well as a true, Observation which I have read in a Learned Man ; namely, That all the many various Attributes of God mentioned in
the

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*the Scripture, are no other than his very Essence, and are ascribed to him to help us in our Conceptions and Understandings of him, who are not able to apprehend what may be known of God, under any one Name or Notion, or by any one Act of the Intellect. We read (you know) of his Power, his Wisdom, his Holiness, his Justice, his Goodness, his Faithfulness, his All-sufficiency, and the like, all which are not distinguished in him, either from himself, or from one another, but are all one and the same God revealed and manifested to us, under various Notions, and that to help us the better to conceive and apprehend him, as also to perform our Homage and Worship to him; accordingly we may say, the Holiness of God is God; the Wisdom of God is God; the Power of God is God; the Goodness of God is God: And to come to my Text, the Unchangeableness of God is God; and indeed the Unchangeableness of God is God manifested and revealed under a Sweet and Blessed, as well as a Glorious, Notion to us, under such a Notion as conduces much to the quickning and encouraging of our Faith and Love, our Comfort and Obedience in him, and to him; and so indeed the Text represents it, *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed*: In which Words we have Two Things to be noted.*

1. Here is a Display or Representation of God in one Ray or Beam of his Divine Glory, and that is his Unchangeableness, *I am the Lord, I change not*; or, *I the Lord am not changed*: For it may be read either Actively or Passively, and the Sense will be the same: *I change not*, I am not alter'd or varied at all; what I was I am, what I am I still shall be: God here (as a Judicious Expositor observes,) tacitly opposes himself to mortal Men, and removes and renounces all Wavering and Inconstancy from himself. *I change not*; as if he should have said, Men

Men die, but I live; Men change, but I change not, I am still the same.

2. Here is a Mention or Declaration of the Blessed Fruit or Issue of this Glorious Perfection of God, in Reference to his Church and People, and that is their Preservation from Destruction: *Therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed.* Here Two Things must be enquired into, First, Who are we to understand by the Sons of *Jacob*? And Secondly, What by their being not consumed?

1. Who are we to understand by the Sons of *Jacob*? By the Sons of *Jacob* here we are to understand God's Professing Church and People. We read in Scripture of *the House of Jacob, the Seed of Jacob, and the Sons of Jacob*; by all which are meant God's Church and People, whom he takes into Covenant with himself, and makes the Objects of his Love; and this will be evident by comparing my Text with *Cap. 1. 2.* where God says expressly that *he loved them*; and again, *I loved Jacob.*

2. What are we to understand by their being not consumed? It imports and carries in it these Two Things,

1. An Exemption from Temporal Ruin.

2. A Preservation from Eternal Destruction.

1. An Exemption from Temporal Ruin: *Therefore ye are not consumed*: That is, Therefore you are not cut off from being a People; therefore you are not utterly broken by my Judgments; 'tis true, some Afflictions you have had, yea, great Afflictions; but yet still you live, still you are a People, you are preserved from utter Ruin and Destruction. And why so? Not because you have not deserved to be utterly cut off and destroyed, but because I am unchangeable; *I am the Lord, I change*

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change not; therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed.

2. A Preservation from Eternal Destruction; *Therefore ye are not consumed; that is, therefore you are not in Hell, therefore you are not under the Eternal Revelations of my Wrath, which (alas!) is what you have deserved: As if God should say to them, True, you have had Affliction, but (alas!) it has been nothing to the desert of your Sin, your Sins have been many and great against me, such as deserved utter Ruin, yea, eternal Destruction, and utter Consumption both of Body and Soul for ever; and this had been your Portion long since, had you not had to deal with an unchangeable God; not your Desert, but my unchangeableness is the sole Cause why you are not utterly and eternally destroyed.*

In short, the Design of the whole was to upbraid them with their Sins, and particularly their Ingratitude; and withal to let them know, that the Reason why it was not worse with them than it was, yea, why they were not totally and eternally destroyed, was not because they did not deserve to have had it so, but because their God was unchangeable: *I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, &c.* In which God seems thus to bespeak them: You complain of me, and have hard Thoughts of me, because 'tis with you as it is, and I do not presently arise for your Help; but let me tell you, 'tis well for you that 'tis not ten thousand times worse with you than it is; 'tis well you are a People; 'tis well you are not among the Damned; sure I am *you highly* deserv'd to have had it so with you: You are a sinful, sinning, rebellious People, a People that have deserved to be destroyed Ten thousand times over; I have done great things for you above any People, I have shewn you much Love, but you have

have not walked suitably and answerably to the great things I have done for you, nor the great Love I have shewn to you: No, you have abused all, and sinned against me under all, and that with an High Hand, whereby you have deserved to be utterly consumed and destroyed; and indeed, had I not been an unchangeable God, consum'd and destroyed you had been long ago; I see that in you and among you for which I might justly destroy you, and that for ever, and nothing but my own unchangeableness keeps you alive; should you therefore complain of me! Should you not rather admire at my Patience and Forbearance so long with you? Truly 'tis a Miracle of Grace, Goodness and Patience in me, that you have not been long since destroyed once for all. This I take to be the true Scope and Meaning of the Word; the Sum of which, together with the Foundation of my intended Discourse from them, I shall give you in this short Position; namely,

*That the Lord Jehovah is an unchangeable God;
or how changeable soever the Creatures are,
yet God the Lord changes not.*

Whoever changes, I the Lord change not, I am always and for ever the same. Now that God is unchangeable, wherein he is unchangeable, why or whence 'tis that he is unchangeable, as also the Vindication of his Unchangeableness from all Cavils and Objections that seem to lye against it, with the Practical Improvement of all, are the Principal Matters that will fall under Consideration in the Prosecution of this Argument; and I hope, by the Assistance of God, we shall find some Light and much Comfort and Quickening in our going through them.

C H A P. II.

*Which contains a general Proof of the
Unchangeableness of God.*

THE Creatures, yea, the best of Creatures in themselves are subject to change; but God is every way, and in all respects, unchangeable; God himself expressly here (you see) asserts his own Unchangeableness. *I am the Lord, I change not;* and 'tis frequently asserted also elsewhe, *Jam. 1. 17. Every good and perfect Gift, (says the Apostle) cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights, with whom is no Variableness or Shadow of Change.* God is here called *the Father of Lights*. He is sometimes called *Light* it self, *1 John 1. 5. God is Light.* By which (as a Learned Man observes) is noted to us the Majesty, Holiness, and perfect Blessedness of God; and here he is called *the Father of Lights*. To note that all Light, all Glory, all Holiness and Blessedness, is originally in him, and that whatever of these Creatures do partake of, does come from him as its proper Spring and Fountain. Now with this Father of Lights there is (says the Apostle) *no Variableness, no Mutation;* the Word is *παράλλαξις*, which is an Astronomical Term taken from the Heavenly Bodies, which suffer many Declinations and Revolutions; the Heavenly Lights have their Vicissitude and Eclipses, their Decreases and Increases; but with God, *the Father of Lights*, there is no such thing, he always shines with a like Brightness, Lustre, and Glory, *with whom is no variableness, nor Shadow of turning;* that is, he is without the least Shew or Resemblance of Change; nothing that looks like a
Change.

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Change is found in him : God is a Sun which doth not Set and Rise ; that can never be Overcast or Eclipsed. So also, - *Psal. 102. 24, 25, 26, 27.* I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my Days ; thy Years are throughout all Generations : Of old hast thou laid the Foundations of the Earth ; and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands ; they all perish, but thou shalt endure, all of them shall wax old like a Garment ; as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no End. Pray observe, the Heavens are the purest Part of the Creation, yet they, the Psalmist tells us, shall wax old, and be changed ; but says he to God, thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no End ; thou changest not, but what thou wert thou art, and wilt be so for ever. The Heavens, and so all the Creatures, do not only wax old and change ; but observe, they change and wax old like a Garment. Cloth by Degrees will rot, and be eaten out by Moths, but a Garment or Vesture is worn and wasted every Day ; every Day brings Changes upon the Creatures more or less, but God changes not, he remains the same for ever ; from Everlasting to Everlasting he is God, as you have it, *Psal. 90. 2.* that is, he is unchangeably one and the same infinitely Holy and Blessed One. God (says one of the Ancients) who changes all things, who works all the Changes are in the World, is himself unchangeable, never New, never Old. Thus you see that God is unchangeable. Now if you ask me what this Unchangeableness of God is ? I answer, that 'tis that Attribute of God whereby he is free from all Corruption and Alteration, is always like himself ; so as that he can neither cease to be what he is, nor begin to be what he is not ; and hereby he is infinitely distinguished from all the Creatures in Perfection and Glory : They are all subject to Corruption and Alteration ; at least in their

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their own Nature they are so, if not in their Con-
dition ; they may cease to be what they are, and
may begin to be what they are not ; they may lose
what they had, and may attain somewhat which
before they had not ; even the very Angels them-
selves are in themselves thus mutable, as may be
more fully hereafter shewn. But now with God
there is no such thing, he is free from all Possibility
of Corruption or Alteration ; he is always the
same, nor can he cease to be what he is, or begin
to be what he is not. But that God is unchange-
able, and also what his Unchangeableness is, will
further appear by what next falls under Considera-
tion.

CHAP. III.

*Which shews wherein, in a peculiar man-
ner, God is unchangeable.*

HAVING thus given you a general Proof of God's
unchangeableness, our next Work shall be
to consider wherein he is unchangeable ; by which
we shall be both further enlightened and confirmed
in this Truth, and withal brought, I hope, into an
Acquaintance with the Life, Power, and Sweet-
ness of it, at least in some Measure. God then is
unchangeable, especially in Six things, all which
do carry unexpressible Sweetness, as well as Glory
in them, and should be great Encouragements to
our Faith and Comfort. He is unchangeable,

1. In his being an Essence.
2. In his Blessedness and Glory.
3. In

3. In his Council and Decree.
4. In his Kingdom and Rule.
5. In his Covenant and Promise.
6. In his Love and Grace to his People.

1. God is unchangeable in his Being and Essence. What the Being or Essence of God is, is not easie for us to conceive or apprehend; the Learned tell us, that the Essence or Being of God is that one meer and pure Act whereby God is God; or thus, that God, in respect of his Essence, is one most pure and meer Act from which all things are, and to which all things return; that is, which is the First Cause and the Last End of all things: But whatever the Essence or Being of God is, yet to be sure he is therein unchangeable, he cannot be changed into another Essence or Being; nor can that which he hath, or rather is, be corrupted or decay: So much is held forth in my very Text. God therein styling himself *Jehovah*. Which Name or Title of his notes, as the Truth and Absoluteness, so the Sameness and Unchangeableness of his Being: Thus *Calvin* and others note upon the Place, and therefore do make that [*I change not*] to be but an *Exegesis*, or somewhat added by way of Explication of this Title *Jehovah*, which here God gives himself, *I am Jehovah, I change not*; *q. d.* I am an Absolute, Independent, Unchangeable Being in my self, and one that gives Being to all the Creatures; and thus the Learned in the *Hebrew* Tongue do all expound this Glorious Name of God; they tell us, that this Glorious Name of his notes both his Being, and the Unchangeableness of his Being; and when God, as in my Text, says, *I am Jehovah*, he does in one Word say, I am He, that Great He, who have my Being in and of my self, and do give Being to all the Creatures, and who in my Being was from all Eternity, am now, and will be

be one and the same for ever. The same thing does God assert of himself in that other Name of his, *Exod. 3. 14.* where he calls himself [*I am;*] God said unto Moses, *I am that I am;* and he said, *Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you.* I am what I am, or, I will what I will be, it notes Eternal and Unchangeable Being in himself, and that he is now, and will be for ever, that which he was before to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It notes (as a Learned Man observes) the Necessity, Eternity, Immutability, and Infinite Fulness of God's Being, and indeed the Fountain of all Being to be in him. It speaks him to be perpetually God, and to his Name Christ alludeth, when he asserts his own Divinity in *John 8. 58.* *Before Abraham was I am.* So *Psal. 102. 27.* *Thou art the same,* says the Psalmist to God; or, which is more suitable to the Hebrew, *Thou art thy self,* always thy self. Thus God is unchangeable in his Being or Essence; and when I say he is unchangeable in his Being or Essence, I say he is unchangeable in all his Essential Properties, his Wisdom, his Power, his Justice, his Holiness, his Omniscience, his All-sufficiency, and the like. For pray mark, The Attributes or Properties of God are not in him distinguished either from his Essence, or from one another really, but notionally or virtually; that is, they are not distinguished at all in God, but are all one and the same Perfection in him; they are indeed, as was noted in the Beginning, the Divine Essence it self; according to that general Rule, whatever is in God is God, they are distinguished only in the manner of our Understanding, which being unable to comprehend that infinite pure Act at once, do conceive thereof after the manner of many Acts; so that I say, when we affirm that God is unchangeable in his Being or Essence, we affirm that he is unchangeable in all his Attributes

and

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and Perfections, in his Holiness, his Wisdom, his Power, his Greatness, his Love, and the like. I'll close this Head with a great Saying which I have read in Austin, *Thou* (says he to God) *alone art God, that Being which cannot possibly be changed either into a better or worse Being, because thou art a most simple Being; to whom 'tis not one thing to live, and another thing to live blessedly, and that because thou art thine own Blessedness; of which more in the next Particular.*

2. God is unchangeable in his Blessedness and Glory: The Lord *Jehovah* is a Glorious and Blessed God, *He is the Blessed*, as well as *the Only Potentate*; 1 Tim. 6. 15. He is Blessed, and that not only Objectively, as he is the great Object of the Praises, Blessings, and Admirings of Men and Angels for ever; nor yet as he is the Spring and Fountain of all that Blessedness which the one and the other of them do eternally enjoy; but Subjectively, being a God Infinitely Blessed and Happy: God is the most Happy and Blessed Being, he is so Blessed that 'tis more than all the Creatures, whether Men or Angels, can do to add the last Tittle or iota to his Blessedness: Hence we read, *That their Goodness extendeth not to him*, Psal. 16. 2. And again, *Can a Man be profitable unto God? And is it Gain to him that thou makest thy Ways perfect? That is, 'Tis no Profit, no Gain to God, no Addition to his Happiness or Perfection, that we, or any, are or do so.* See also Job 22. 2, 3. and Chap. 35. 7, 8. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou unto him? Or what receiveth he of thine Hand? Thy Wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art, and thy Righteousness may profit the Son of Man, but not God: As if he should say, God is never the more Happy or Unhappy by any thing the Creature does or can do: 'Tis true, the Saints and Angels both do love him, praise him, admire and adore him for ever; they* cast

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cast all their Crowns down at his Foot: But alas! this adds not one *Iota* to his Happiness; no, *He is exalted above all Blessing and Praise*, Nehem. 9. 5. Yea, 'tis a *Stooping*, a *Condescension* in him to take Notice of these things, as you have it, *Psal. 113. 5, 6.* And indeed, 'tis our Happiness, not God's, to love him, serve him, praise him, walk with him, and live to him. *Who art thou, Lord, (says Aug.) and, what am I that thou shouldest command me to love thee, that thou wilt accept of Love from me, and threaten me with great Miseries unless I will love thee?* He admires the Condescension of God herein. Yea, such is the Blessedness of God, that he himself cannot add hereunto; God cannot make himself more Blessed, Happy and Perfect, than he is; nothing can by Infiniteness be added unto Infiniteness: Now as he is thus Blessed, so his Blessedness is unchangeable; hence one of his Names is, *Over all, God Blessed for evermore*, Rom. 9. 5. *Ἐἰς τὰς αἰῶνας*, throughout all Ages, and to all Eternity: Alas! God makes his People unchangeably Blessed; and he that makes others unchangeably Blessed, is doubtless unchangeable in his own Blessedness. But this will further appear by considering a little what the Blessedness of God is, and wherein it does lye; it lyes wholly in that Infinite Delight, Solace and Satisfaction, which he hath in Himself, in the Vision and Fruition of Himself, and those Infinite Glories and Perfections which are in him, and which he sees and knows will be in him for ever. (First,) God is an Infinite Ocean of Sweetness, Perfection, and Glory; he has all Good and all Perfection in him, as in its Fountain, Fulness, and Purity; as all the Lines in the Circumference do meet, and are united in the Center; so all Excellencies and Perfections do meet and are united in God; and as God has all Excellencies and Perfections in him, so (Secondly) he perfectly understands his own Infinite Per-

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fections, contemplates them, and has an Infinite Delight, Solace, and Satisfaction in them; he is Infinitely Pleased and at Rest in himself, and in the Vision and Fruition of his own Perfections, and this is his Blessedness; hence he tells us, that *he is God All sufficient*; that is to say, for and to himself, as well as for and to his People, *Gen. 17. 1. I am God All-sufficient*, I am my own Blessedness; and, *Abraham, I am thy Blessedness*, and I have enough for both. The Truth is, all our Happiness lies in God, in the Knowledge and Enjoyment of God; *This is Life eternal, to know thee the only true God, Joh. 17. 3.* And *Happy is the People whose God is the Lord, Psal. 144. 15.* *He that made me is Good, (says Austin) and he is my Good, my Happiness, and in him will I exult and rejoice above all my other good things.* And 'tis a great Saying which he has to the same Purpose elsewhere: *Unhappy is that Man (says he) who knows all other things, but is ignorant of thee, O God; but blessed is he who knows thee, though he be ignorant of other things; but he that knows both thee and other things too, he is not the more happy because he knows other things, but he is happy in thee only.* Thus our Happiness lies in God and the Vision of him; and where should his own Happiness lie but in himself? He that is the Spring and Fountain of our Happiness, is an everlasting Fountain of Happiness to himself: *Thou thy self (says Austin) art thine own Happiness.* I'll close this Head with a great Saying of a Learned Man; *God (says he) is such an Infinitely Perfect and Happy Being that nothing can be added to him, nothing can be taken from him: He can want nothing out of himself, nor can he receive any thing but from himself; and he is Infinitely Sufficient for and to himself, having all things in himself.*

3. God is unchangeable in his Counsels and Decrees: We read in Scripture several times of the
Counsels

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Counsels of God ; *Thy Counsels of old are Faithfulness and Truth, Isa. 25. 1.* And in Eph. 1. 11. he is said to work all things according to the Counsel of his own Will : And the same thing is elsewhere mentioned under the Notion, sometimes of his Purpose, and sometimes his Decree : And to understand this, you must know that God from all Eternity did as it were sit in Council with his own Wisdom, Justice, and Grace, and in that Council did absolutely Decree and Determine the Futurition, that is to say, the infallible future Being of whatever is besides himself, unto the Praise of his own Glory ; for that is the Purpose, Counsel or Decree, of God ; 'tis his Free, Absolute, and Eternal, Determining of all things which have been, are, or shall be, so as himself saw fittest to have them ; or, it is that one, free, constant, Act of God, whereby he hath absolutely determined all things in a Subserviency to his own Glory : Now in this Counsel or Decree of his he is unchangeable, and the same for ever ; what he willeth he willeth always, his willing of things being one pure Act, without any Interruption or Shadow of Change ; this the Scripture is full in Psal. 33. 11. *The Counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations :* So Prov. 19. 21. *There are many Devices in a Man's Heart ; nevertheless the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand.* Men may plot and fight against God and his Counsel, but yet it will stand, and that for ever : And you have this Truth asserted by God himself, you have it from his own Mouth, Isa. 46. 10. *My Counsel shall stand (says God) and I will do all my Pleasure.* God derides the Counsels of Men that oppose him and his People, telling them expressly that they shall not stand, Isa. 8. 10. But as for his own Counsel that shall stand ; hence also we read of the Immutability of his Counsel, Heb. 6. 17, 18. *God willing more abundantly*

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dantly to shew unto the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it by an Oath; that by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong Consolation, &c. Mark, the Immutability of his Counsel, and Two Immutable Things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie: That is, his Counsel and his Oath, and his Counsel confirmed by his Oath; confirmed, namely to our Faith; not in it self, for his Counsel in it self is as firm without as with his Oath, and his Oath is added meerly as an Indulgence and Condescension to our Weakness; therefore 'tis added, that we might have strong Consolation; and 'tis to shew unto the Heirs of Promise, &c. And as his Counsels in general, so his particular Counsels concerning Mens Eternal Estates are also immutable: *The Foundation of God standeth sure*, (says the Apostle) *having this Seal, the Lord knoweth who are his*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. By the Metaphor both of a Foundation and Seal. Here (as a Learned Man observes upon the Place) is to be understood God's Decree of Election unto Eternal Life; and this standeth sure, (says the Apostle) this changes, this varies not, and to the same Purpose Calvin speaks upon the Place. *The Apostle*, (says he) *calls us to look back upon the Election of God, which he stiles a Foundation, hereby shewing the firm and stable Constancy or Immutability of it*: So Rom. 9. 11. *That the Purpose of God according to Election might stand*. God will have his own Eternal Purpose according to his Election stand, and stand it shall, and that for ever. Thus God is unchangeable in his Counsels: Alas! all his Counsels are Free, Wise, Absolute, Powerful, Counsels, and therefore they cannot change: And this Calvin takes to be a special part of the Meaning of the Text; namely, God's Unchangeableness in his Counsels; for thus he speaks: *God* (says he) *remains firm and stedfast in his own Purposes, nor*

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is he bended or varied this way and that way, as Men oftentimes repent of, and change their own Counsels, because things come into their Mind which they thought not of before ; and so they wish that undone which they have done, and do seek ways of retracting their own Acts ; and 'tis a Saying I have read in Austin ; God (says he) changes his Works, not his Counsels. O let us reverence and adore God in this his Unchangeableness !

4. God is unchangeable in his Kingdom and Rule : God has a Kingdom and Dominion over the whole World, which Kingdom and Dominion of his is that Absolute Right and Power whereby he possesseth all things as his own, and also orders and disposes of them as he pleases, ruling and governing the whole World according to the Counsel of his own Will, and in a Subserviency to his own most Wise and Holy Ends ; hence he is said to be over all, *Rom. 9. 5.* and above all, *Eph. 4. 6.* to wit, in Kingdom, Power, and Dominion ; he has a Right to all, and he has the Ordering and Dispose of all, both Persons and Things, States and Kingdoms : *He is the most High that ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men, and gives them to whomsoever he will, Dan. 4. 32.* He works all, and orders all, in the Kingdom of Providence, as well as in the Kingdom of Grace, and that according to the Counsel of his own Will, *Eph. 1. 11.* He rules and commands all ; *He hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all, Psal. 103. 19.* He doth whatsoever he pleases in Heaven and on Earth, in the Seas, and in all deep Places, *Psal. 135. 6.* Now in this Kingdom and Dominion of his he is Unchangeable ; it admits of neither Stop nor Period ; he ruleth by his Power for ever, *Psal. 66. 7.* *Thy Kingdom, O Lord, is an everlasting Kingdom, a Kingdom of Ages, and thy Dominion endureth throughout all Generations, Psal. 145. 13.* And I blessed the most High,

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High, (says Nebuchadnezzar) whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and his Kingdom from Generation to Generation, Dan. 4. 34. Ah, Sirs, whatever Men think, yet God governs the World, and his Dominion is over all; *The Lord reigns*, (saith the Psalmist) *Psal. 93. 1.* He hath reigned, he doth reign, and he will reign for ever: There is a Day coming when all Rule, Authority and Power, shall be put down, and that once for all, even the Principality of the Angels themselves (as Calvin observes) not excepted, 1 Cor. 15. 24. But God reigns for ever and ever, and his Kingdom has no End: Thus he is unchangeable in his Kingdom and Rule in the World, which is a great Encouragement to the People of God: O my Beloved, God governs the World now as well as heretofore; yea, and he governs it in our Nature now as well as heretofore, *John 5. 27.* He governs all by the Man Christ, who has a natural tender Care of, and Respect to, his Church and People in all; let us therefore say with the Psalmist, *The Lord reigneth, let the People tremble; the Lord reigneth, let Sion rejoice: God is not, God cannot be, put by his Throne and Kingdom.*

5. God is unchangeable in his Covenant and Promise, his Covenant and Promise with his People in Christ: God hath made a Covenant with his People in Christ, a Covenant of Peace, a Covenant of Grace, a Covenant of Love; a Covenant founded upon Grace, a Covenant full of Grace, a Covenant wholly made up of Grace and Love, from first to last, therefore called *Grace* in the Abstract, *Rom. 6. 14.* a Full Covenant, a Rich Covenant, a Precious Covenant, a Covenant made up of Rich, yea, exceeding Rich and, Precious, Promises, and filled with exceeding Rich and Precious Treasures, precious *Grace*, precious *Peace*, precious *Pardon*, precious *Righteousness*, precious *Salvation*; with a

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precious God, a precious Christ, a precious Spirit, a precious Heaven and Blessedness for ever. Now in this Covenant, and in all the precious Promises of it, is God the Lord unchangeable: Hence you have it so often called an Everlasting Covenant; I will establish my Covenant between me and thee (says God to Abraham) for an Everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee, Gen. 17. 7. Again, I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them (speaking of his People) and I will not turn away from them to do them good, Jer. 32. 40. and as an Everlasting Covenant, so an Everlasting and Sure Covenant; God hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant, (says David) well ordered in all things, and sure, 2 Sam. 23. 5. And again, Come, and I will make with you an Everlasting Covenant, even the sure Mercies of David, Isa. 55. 3. Hence also 'tis called a Covenant of Salt, Num. 18. 19. that is, a firm, a durable, an unchangeable, Covenant. Many other Ways does God set forth the Immutability of his Covenant, and that for the Encouragement of our Faith and Comfort: How sweet is that Word, and what a Rest may it be to Faith? Isa. 54. 9, 10. This is as the Waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the Waters of Noah should no more go over the Earth, so have I sworn that I will no more be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee: For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee. Pray observe, God had in the two foregoing Verses promised his Church and People, that, though for a small Moment he had forsaken them, yet with great Mercies he would gather them; and that though in a little Wroth he had hid his Face from them for a Moment, yet with Everlasting Kindness he would have Mercy on them: And here in these two Verses he gives them a double Ground

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of the Assurance hereof; the one taken from his Oath, and the Unchangeableness thereof, *Verf. 9.* the other from his Covenant, and the Unchangeableness thereof, *Ver. 10.* For the Mountains shall depart; &c. as if he should say, The Mountains and Hills may sooner be removed than my Covenant; yea, the time will come when these shall be removed, but the time will never come that my Covenant shall fail or be removed. But what if his People sin, what then? Why then he will correct and chastise them for their Sin, but his Covenant he will keep firm and inviolable for ever notwithstanding: For this you have a full and an express Text, *Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34.* *If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments; then will I visit their Transgressions with a Rod, and their Iniquities with Stripes. Nevertheless (O Gracious Nevertheless) my Loving-kindness will I not take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail; my Covenant will I not break, &c.* We sin and break, and break and sin, and God chastises us, it may be, for our Sin, but yet still his Covenant remains firm and unchangeable. So *2 Tim. 2. 13.* *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself: Oh, I have an unbelieving Heart, and I shall, I fear, forfeit all; although thou hast an unbelieving Heart, yet God remains faithful. Thus God is unchangeable in his Covenant; alas! his Covenant is built upon unchangeable Love, and sealed with unchangeable Blood, and cannot therefore but be unchangeable: And, as the Covenant, so all the Promises of the Covenant, are sure and unchangeable, they are all Yea and Amen in Christ, 2 Cor. 1. 20. that is, they are all sure, firm, unchangeable, Promises, Promises that will certainly be made good: Men promise many times, and change; but God promises, and changes not; and*

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this some conceive to be held forth in that Name of his, *I am*, *Exod. 3. 14. I am that I am*; or, *I am what I was*; or, *I will be what I was*; that is, as one expounds it, *I will be in my Performances, what I was in my Promises*: God makes good all his Promises to a Tittle: He that is Truth it self, and Faithfulness it self, cannot lie, cannot fail. 'Tis a sweet Saying I have read in *Austin, They are thy Promises, O Lord, and who need fear being deceived when Truth it self promises?* Oh, we need not fear, we need not question, for God is true, God is faithful; Oh, how sweet are the Thoughts of an unchangeable Covenant; God has laid himself under Bonds to his People, when he was infinitely free in himself; and under Bonds to do great things for them, to pardon their Iniquities, Transgressions and Sins; to give them a new Heart and a new Spirit, to pour out his Spirit upon them; to cause them to walk in his Statutes and Judgments to do them; to write his Laws in their Hearts, and put them into their inward Parts; to cleanse them from all their Filthiness and Idols; to put his Fear into their Hearts that they shall never depart from him; and (which is all in one) to be a God unto them, and that they shall be his People; that is, he has laid himself under Bonds to be to them, and to do for them, what a God can be to and do for them; and he is firm and unchangeable in all, and all shall assuredly have its Accomplishment in its Season. Oh, how sweet is this? This was *David's Death-bed Cordial, 2-Sam. 23. 5. Although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant; and this is all my Salvation and all my Desire*; and indeed well it might; for what could *David* or any desire more than is contained in God's Covenant, which has Heaven on Earth, God and the Creature, Time and Eternity, all in it? Oh, study this Covenant

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of God, and the Unchangeableness of it, and you will find it an unchangeable Spring of Comfort to you. God himself found Fault with the first Covenant, 'tis said, and why? Why, because it made no Provision for his People against Sin; but you will be able to find no Fault with this Covenant, this being *well ordered in all things, and sure*; as in the Place last quoted you have it.

6. God is unchangeable in his Grace and Love to his People. God loves his People, and that with a Choice and peculiar Love, a Love like that wherewith he loves Christ himself, *Joh. 17. 23.* They are indeed *the Dearly Beloved of his Soul*, as you have it, *Jer. 12. 7.* and in this Love of his towards them he is unchangeable, always the same, which I shall at once a little open and evince unto you in Three Propositions.

1. God is unchangeable in his Love it self to his People, that being always the same towards them; *I have loved thee* (says God to his People) *with an Everlasting Love, Jer. 31. 3.* with a Love that is from Everlasting to Everlasting, without Change or Period; God's Love to his People is so firm and stable that nothing whatever can possibly null or alter it, nothing can possibly cast them out of his Heart; if any thing could do it, it would be their Sinnings against him, and their Breakings with him; but these do not, cannot, do it; so he has told us, *Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32, 33.* If they sin, I'll correct them for their Sin; *but my Loving-kindness I will not take from them*; (or, as some render it,) I will not so much as interrupt my Love towards them; as if he should say, though they sin, yet I'll love them still: God does not love the Sins of his People, no, he hates them, but he loves their Persons notwithstanding their Sins: But what if Afflictions and Temptations be added to their Sins, and both the one and the other rise high, will not this

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this break off his Love from them? No, see that Triumph of the *Apostle* upon this Account, *Rom. 8. ult. Who shall separate us from the Love of God? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, and the like? Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Here you see are Afflictions and Temptations added to Sins; yea, here are Heights and Depths of these things, but all cannot separate God's People from his Love, nor cast them out of his Heart. One I remember gives the Sum of the whole in this short Word; *God hath loved from Eternity, and he will love to Eternity.* The Truth is, could either Sins or Sufferings cast us out of God's Heart, and separate us from his Love, who then among the Saints could hope to continue in his Love, and upon his Heart? Besides, in the Place lately quoted, *Isa. 54. 9, 10.* God says expressly, that though the Mountains should be removed; yet his Kindness to his People should not be removed; no, that remains firm and stedfast for ever. True, God may possibly afflict his People, and that many ways, and very sorely; he may speak against them as against *Ephraim, Jer. 31. 20.* write against them, and that bitter things, as against *Job, Job 13. 26.* He may fight against them, as against those, *Isa. 63. 10.* He may frown upon them, and let in his Terrors into them, as he did upon and into *He-man, Psal. 88. ult.* But yet still he loves them, still they are dear to him.

2. God is unchangeable in all the special saving Fruits and Effects of his Love to his People, *Rom. 11. 29. The Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance; that is, the Gifts of his effectual Calling,*

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or his saving Gifts, such as effectual Calling, and the like, shall never be repented of, never be recalled or reversed by him, as they who receive those Gifts will have no Cause to repent, but to rejoice in them for ever, so God who gives them, will not repent that he gave them to them. God gives Christ, he gives Grace, he gives Peace, he gives Pardon, he gives Righteousness, he gives Salvation, he gives Eternal Life to his People, and all out of his Love to them; and he never recalls or reverses these Fruits and Effects of Love. You have another full Text for this, *Jam. 1. 17. Every good and every perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, nor Shadow of turning.* Mark, Having spoken of the perfect Gifts of God, presently he adds, *with whom is no Variableness*; as if he should say, as all good and saving Gifts come from God, so he is unchangeable in all: Indeed there are common Gifts, and Gifts of a meer outward Calling, which God out of a common Love and Bounty gives to Men, and these many times he recalls, they not improving them: So the Talent was taken from the slothful Servant, *Mat. 25. 28.* and you know what Christ speaks immediately thereupon, *v. 29. Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have Abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.* Pray observe, *To him that hath shall be given*; that is, whoever God hath bestowed Gifts and Talents upon, and he improves them for God and his own Salvation, he shall have more Gifts and more Talents, he shall have an abundant Increase of these things: *But from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.* Here seems to be a Contradiction, *Him that hath not*, and yet *what he has*; the Meaning in short is this: That when God bestows such and such Gifts and Talents upon

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a Person to be employed for his Glory, and he does not so employ them, he does not rightly use and improve them, what God hath bestowed upon him shall be taken away: But 'tis otherwise with the saving Gifts and Fruits of God's special Love, these God never rever recalls, which is a sweet Contemplation. Soul! hath God bestowed some of his saving Gifts upon thee? Then they are thine for ever: Has he given thee his Christ? He will never repent of it, never call him back again, but sweet Jesus is thine for ever: Has he given thee his Spirit? He will never repent of it, nor will he ever recall this Blessed Gift from thee; the Holy, Good, and Glorious, Spirit is thine for ever: Has he given thee a New and Spiritual Life? Has he given thee Grace, Pardon, Righteousness, Justification, and the like? He will never repent of it; all these are thine for ever: O how sweet is this to contemplate! Thou may'st sit down and say, Christ is mine, the Comforter is mine, Life, Peace, Pardon, Righteousness, Salvation, are all mine, and that for ever.

3. God is unchangeable in the real Designs and Workings of his Love; I say, real, though not sensible; God's Love to his People may be suspended and interrupted as to the sensible Influences and Manifestations thereof, but yet even then 'tis active and really at Work for them, however the outward Dispensation may vary; now smile, then frown; now lift up, then cast down; now fill, then empty; now form Light, then create Darkness; yet in all still he goes on in one even constant Tenure of Love towards them; in all his Love is at Work for them, and towards them, and he intends and designs them as much Love in one as in the other, and accordingly first or last effects and accomplishes it: And this is but agreeable to his Covenant with them, and Promise to them, *Jer.*

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32. 40. *I'll make* (says he to his People) *an Everlasting Covenant with you, never to turn away from you to do you good. And, All things shall work together for Good to them that love God, Rom. 8. 28.* Whatever God does with us, however he seems to carry it towards us, yet still he is doing us good, and acting his Love towards us; We (as an Holy Man speaks) are apt to think that God shews us Love when he doth some great thing for us; but (saith he) God is always acting out his Love towards us when he frowns, as well as when he smiles; when he withdraws, as well as when he approaches to us: In a Word, Soul! whatever God does there is Love in it, and he designs thee Love and Good by it. Does he smile, give, fill, keep alive, draw near to thee? In all there is Love; his special Love works and runs through all; or, does he frown, take, empty, kill, hide his Face? In all this there is Love, yea, the same special Love of his works in all, and runs through all; God is acting out his Love to thee in the one as well as the other. O how sweet is this! Death to the People of God comes from the same Fountain of Love in God's Heart that Life does.

CHAR

C H A P. IV.

Which gives an Account why or whence it is that God is Unchangeable.

THAT God is unchangeable, as also wherein, you have already seen. That which falls next under Consideration, is to shew whence it is that God is indeed thus unchangeable ; or if you will, what Basis and Foundation the Unchangeableness of God is built upon : 'Tis built upon a Threefold Basis or Foundation :

1. The Infinite Purity and Simplicity of his Nature.
2. The Infinite Excellency and Perfection of his Being.
3. The Infinite Extent and Compass of his Wisdom.

1. The Unchangeableness of God is built upon, or springs from, the Infinite Purity and Simplicity of his Nature. God, my Beloved, is a most pure Act ; he is a *Spirit*, an Infinite Spirit, *Joh. 4. 24.* and so an infinitely pure, simple, uncompounded, Being, and therefore unchangeable. God (says a Learned Man) *is a most simply and perfectly pure Act, free from all Composition ; and therefore cannot possibly be dissolved, corrupted, or wax old and decay.* And Austin, I remember, founds God's Unchangeableness upon this Ground or Basis : *Thou only art God, (says he) and canst not be changed, either into a better or worse Being than what thou art, because thou art a most pure and simple Being.* Men, and so other Creatures, have their Mixtures and Compositions ; they are compounded and made up of different

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different Elements, Qualities and Humours, and that is one Reason among others why they change; but God is a most pure simple Being, he is Purity and Simplicity it self, and therefore unchangeable: Angels and Souls have a Composition in them, they are compounded of Subject and Accidents, Nature and Qualities, or Graces; but God is one meer and perfect Act, without all Composition, Division, Multiplication, or the like, and therefore without Change: Where there is Composition, there may be Mutation; but where there is infinite Simplicity, there is absolute Immutability; and thus 'tis you see with God.

2. The Unchangeableness of God is built upon, and arises, from the Infinite Excellency and Perfection of his Being. As God is a most pure and simple, so he is a most perfect Being, an infinitely perfect Being, and therefore unchangeable: Men are imperfect, and therefore they change; God is perfect, and therefore he changes not. All Change, my Beloved, argues Imperfection in the Subject changed: For, pray observe, there is a twofold Change, there is a Corruptive, and there is a Perfective, Change; a Corruptive Change is a Change from good to bad, or from bad to worse, and such a Change to be sure argues Imperfection in the Subject; a Perfective Change is a Change from bad to good, or from good to better; and this also argues Imperfection in the Subject; this argues the Subject to be imperfect before, whatever 't's now: Thus all Change necessarily argues Imperfection; but God is infinitely perfect, and therefore not subject to Change; he is capable of no Corruptive, nor yet a Perfective, Change; because he is an infinitely perfect Being, and so can have nothing added to him, nothing taken from him: *Be ye perfect* (says Christ) *as your Heavenly Father is perfect*, Mat. 5. 48. Our Heavenly Father

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ther is a perfect Being, he is both essentially and originally perfect; he is perfect in himself, having all Excellencies and Perfections centring in him; and he is the Spring and Cause of all those Excellencies and Perfections that are found in the Creatures: *God is Light, (says St. John) and in him is no Darkness at all, 1 Joh. 1. 5.* that is, he is both pure and perfect; pure without Mixture, and perfect without Defect; he is wholly Perfection, and therefore unchangeable. What shall I say? God is so good, so full, so blessed, so every way perfect, that 'tis impossible he should change. 'Tis a great Speech I have read in one of the Ancients; *For thee, or to thee, Lord, to be and to live, are not two things; because thou art the chief Being, and the chief Life; thou art every way the Highest, the Chiefest, the most Excellent, and thou art not changed: And indeed therefore he cannot change. My Beloved, God has told us, that he is God All-sufficient, I am God All-mighty, (says he) or God All-sufficient, I have all Fulness, Blessedness, and Perfection, in me: He (as one upon the Place notes) is most sufficient, one who is infinitely sufficient for himself, and who also vouchsafes a Sufficiency to his People. He has all Excellency and Perfection in him, and that in a blessed Union and Conjunction; and how then should he change?*

3. The Unchangeableness of God is built upon, and springs from, the infinite Fulness and Extent of his Wisdom and Understanding: As God is a most pure and perfect, so he is a most wise, Being, and therefore unchangeable; and this refers principally to his Unchangeableness in his Kingdom, Counsels, Covenant and Love: Mens Wisdom is weak, and their Understandings dark and shallow, and therefore they Change; they are not to Day what they were Yesterday, nor will they be to Morrow perhaps what they are to Day; but God

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is infinitely wise, and knows all things, and therefore he changes not; he is the same for ever. Men change, (says Calvin) they oftentimes wish the things undone, which they have done, and seek Ways of retracting their own Acts or Grants, because with them things come to mind many times which they foresaw not, nor ever thought of: But (says he) God denies any such thing to be found with him; he is infinitely wise, he has a perfect Knowledge and Understanding of things, and therefore changes not: He is called in Scripture a God of Knowledge, 1 Sam. 2. 3. Yea, he is said to be perfect in Knowledge, Job 37. 16. he has a perfect Knowledge of all things, whether past, present, or to come; he sees and knows all things at once, *uno intuitu*, with one Prospect, or by one single Aspect, and that unerringly and infallibly: He knows all things by one most simple, immutable, and eternal, Act of Understanding; God is in Scripture stiled the only wise God, 1 Tim. 1. 17. and his Understanding is said to be infinite, Psal. 147. 5. God, my Beloved, sees and knows himself, and in himself, all things, always, perfectly, and at once; all things without Exception; always without Interruption; perfectly without Defect; and at once without Succession; Known unto God are all his Works from the Foundation of the World, (says the Apostle) Acts 15. 18. In a Word, my Beloved, God has a perfect Prospect of all things in his Eternity, neither can there be any thing new to him, that should occasion a Change in him: And thus you see upon what Basis or Foundation the Unchangeableness of God is built.

C H A P. V.

Several Propositions laid down for the obviating of Objections, and the vindicating of God's Unchangeableness from all Cavil and Contradiction.

THE next Work we have to do, is to vindicate the Unchangeableness of God from all Cavils and Contradiction, and to obviate such Objections as may seem to lye against it, which I shall do by making good these Four Propositions.

1. The First Proposition is this; That God's repenting, which we sometimes read of in Scripture, is no way inconsistent with, or repugnant to the Truth and Glory of his Unchangeableness. Oftentimes in Scripture God is said to repent, and he is said to repent both of what he has done, and also of what he hath said he would do. First, He is said to repent of some things he had done. So he is said to repent that ever he made Man, Gen. 6. 6. *It repented the Lord that he had made Man on the Earth; and it grieved him at his Heart.* So it repented him that he had made Saul King, 1 Sam. 15. 11. *It repenteth me (says God) that I have set up Saul to be King.* Secondly, God is said to repent of some things which he hath said he would do. So, Psal. 135. 14. *The Lord will repent him concerning his Servants.* So, Jer. 26. 19. *The Lord repented him of the Evil which he had pronounced against them;* with many other Places which might be mentioned: Thus God is said to repent both ways. Now Repentance imports a Change; and how then is God unchangeable? I Answer, Never the less unchangeable because of his repenting; for,
pray

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pray observe, when God is said in Scripture to repent, 'tis to be *understood* not in a proper, but in an improper and allusive, Sense; not *affectivè*, but *effectivè*; not according to his internal Will, but an external Work: God is therefore said to repent, because he doth as Men do when they repent, that is, he changeth his Deeds, yet without any Change of his Will; yea, the Change of his Deeds is the Execution of his unchangeable Will: When Men repent, they cease to do what they had begun, and they are ready to destroy what they had wrought; and thus God is said to repent, not because his Mind is changed, but because he ceaseth to do what he did, or he destroyeth what he had made: Thus he is said to *repent of his making Saul King*, because he meant to remove him from being King; and to *repent of his making Man*, because he meant to destroy Man for his Sin. Now such repenting does not argue the least Change in God, and therefore in the very same Place where he is said thus to repent, he is also said not to repent, as 1 Sam. 15. 11. & 29. 11. he is said to *repent of making Saul King*: And in *vers. 29.* 'tis said of him, *that he will not lie, nor repent, nor is he a Man that he should repent*; he can no more repent in a proper Sense, as Repentance imports Change, than he can lie; and when, as there 'tis said of him, *that he is not a Man that he should repent*, there is thus much implied, That he must cease to be God, and become Man, if he so repents as to note Change in him. 'Tis a good, and indeed a great, Observation which one has upon this Place; *No Repentance* (says he) *can properly befall God, whereas he is Immutable, most Wise, most Blessed; but he is said to repent, when he retracts and revokes his Benefits from a Person or People.* In a Word, he is said to repent, *quoad effectorum mutationem*, as to the Change of Effects, but *non quoad seipsum*, not as to himself, in

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in either his Nature or Will: But this will appear further in the next Proposition. Therefore,

2. The Second Proposition is this, That the Non-execution and Accomplishment of some Threats and Promises of God, which we find in his Word, is no Impeachment of his Unchangeableness. True, there are many things both threatned and promised by God in his Word that do never come to pass; God sometimes threatens what he does not execute, as in the Case of *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings 20. 1, and 5. compared; and of *Nineveh*, *Jon.* 3. 4. with 10. On the other Hand, God sometimes promises that which is never accomplished, of which Instances not a few might be given. Now does not this impeach and contradict his unchangeableness? I Answer, No; neither the one nor the other of these is any way repugnant or contradictory thereunto: For, pray consider, those Threatnings and Promises which are not accomplish'd, are not absolute, but conditional, Threatnings and Promises, Threatnings and Promises that have either an expresse or implicit Condition in them, which Condition being wanting, the Non-accomplishment of the Threat or Promise is so far from being inconsistent with, that it strongly argues the unchangeableness of God. I shall illustrate this by some Instances, *Jer.* 18. 7, 8, 9, 10. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my Sight, that it obey not my Voice, then I will repent of the Good wherewith I said I would benefit them.* Mark, here is both Evil threatned, and Good promised, but both under a Condition;

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now, if the Condition, upon which the one is threatned, and the other is promised, be wanting, let it not be imputed to any Change in God, if either the one or the other be not accomplish'd: When an Evil is threatned, and not executed, and when a Good is promised, and not performed, the Non-execution of the one, and the Non-performance of the other, is not because God is not unchangeable, but because the Condition upon which the one was threatned, and the other promised, is found wanting. I might argue in like manner from *Psal. 7. 12. Luke 13. begin. Rev. 2. 22.* But let this one suffice instead of all the rest. And to this Purpose speaks a Learned Man. *God (says he) changes his Sentence, the outward Threatning or Promise, but not his Decree, not his inward Counsel or Purpose.* And to the same Effect is the Saying of another; *If (says he) we respect the Counsel of God, that he does not, he cannot, change, but his Mind and Will revealed by the Prophets that is often changed.* And 'tis a great Saying of one of the School-men, *'Tis one thing (says he) for God to change his Will, and another thing to will a Change:* God often wills and determines a Change, but he never changes his Will or Determination; thus where an Evil is threatned, or a Good promised, which is not accomplish'd, the Non-accomplishment of it is not because God is not unchangeable, but because the Threat or Promise was conditional, and the Condition thereof was wanting.

3. The Third Proposition is this, That none of those Changes, which seem to be attributed to God in Scripture, are really opposite to his unchangeableness. I grant, the Scripture several times represents God, seemingly at least, under Changes to us; sometimes he is represented as being changed from an Enemy to a Friend, to be reconciled

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reconciled to them with whom he was offended before; hence we read of his *being pacified towards Sinners*, Ezek. 16. 63. So Isa. 12. 1. *Though thou wast angry with me, (says the Church to God) yet thine Anger is turned away.* Again, sometimes God is represented as being changed from a Friend to an Enemy, to be at War with them with whom he was before at Peace: So Job 30. 21. *Thou art become cruel to me; or, thou art turned or changed, q. d. Thou wert good and gracious, but now thou art severe and cruel: So Isa. 63. 10. He was turned to be their Enemy, and fought against them.* Thus both these Ways God seems to be represented under Changes; and how then is he unchangeable? Nevertheless unchangeable for all this; and to vindicate God's Unchangeableness notwithstanding this, I would intreat you to consider Two Things.

1. Consider, that God is unchangeable under the most various and changeable Dispensations that he does or can walk in towards us. 'Tis true, the external Dispensation changes, his outward Course and Carriage towards us is very changeable and various; now he smiles, and then he frowns; now he fills, and then he empties; now he lifts, and then he casts down; now he breaks, and then he binds up, &c. Thus the outward Dealings and Dispensations of God are very changeable and various; yet in and under all he himself changes not, but is still the same, the same in his Being and in his Blessedness, and the same in his Counsel, Covenant, and Love to us. Hence, Psal. 25. 10. *All the Paths (that is, the Providences and Dispensations) of the Lord are said to be Mercy and Truth to his People: His Paths towards them are very various in themselves, but God's Love and Grace is the same in all. The outward Dispensation of God toward us, it may be, is changed; he*
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did smile, but now he frowns; he did give, but now he takes away; he did form Light, but now he creates Darkness for us; and hereupon we apprehend that God Himself, his Heart, his Counsel, his Covenant, his Love, is changed; but 'tis only in our Apprehension; for Indeed, and in Truth, he is the same still; the most variable of his Dispensations do not argue the least Variableness in him at all; and indeed, where he is a Friend, he is a Friend for ever; and where he is an Enemy, he is an Enemy for ever; the Change is only in the external Dispensation.

2. Consider, that the Change is in us, and not in God; God is always the same, but we are not the same; when God is pacified towards those with whom he was offended, they are changed, not he, he is the same he was; and when he is angry with Saints, with whom he was before at Peace, they are changed, not he: The Change was in *Job*, not in God, when he said, *Thou art turned to be cruel to me*: The Change was in the Church, not in God, when he was said to be *turned to be their Enemy*. God (says a Worthy Divine) is the same, his Love is the same, his Wrath is the same, his Mercy is the same, his Justice is the same, and that for ever; but we changing are cast sometimes under the Effects of his Love, and sometimes under the Effects of his Wrath; we are sometimes under the saddest Droppings of his Justice, and sometimes under the sweetest Influences of his Mercy. As a Man that changes his Aspect, and turns about his Body to another Point of the Heavens, that Part of the Heavens which was before at his Right Hand, is now at his Left. Not but that the Heavens are as they were, they change not, either their Position or Motion, but the Man hath changed his. So the Wrath and Love, the Justice and Mercy, of God stand always at the same Point, but

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we turn, sometimes Justice-ward, sometimes Mercy-ward; now we face his Wrath, and then his Love; thus the Change is in us, and not in God, and so he remains unchangeable still.

4. The Fourth Proposition is this, That God's Unchangeableness does no way exclude or invalidate the Use of Means: If God be unchangeable, then to what Purpose is the Use of Means? Why do we pray, or hear, or use, any Means in order to our eternal Good? Why, my Beloved, God's Unchangeableness does no way exclude or invalidate the Use of Means; for pray consider, (First) That God wills the Means as well as the End, and the Means in order to the End; he wills our Praying as well as our Pardon, our Hearing as well as our Happiness, our Sowing as well as our Reaping, our Sowing in the Use of Means as well as our Reaping in the Harvest of Mercy. He wills our Believing as our Blessedness, he wills the one as well as the other; yea, he wills the one in order to the other, and that with the same absolute immutable and eternal Will; *He hath ordained we should walk in good Works, Eph. 2. 10. and he hath chosen us to Salvation, through the Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth, 2 Thes. 2. 13.*— (Secondly) Consider, that as God wills the Means as well as the End, so through the Use of these it is, that he gives out himself and his Blessings to us, and at last brings us to the End: God makes a Covenant with his People, and therein lays himself under Bonds to do great things for them, as great as a God can do; but he will have them pray for them, nor will he do them but in a Way of Prayer, *Ezek. 36. 37.* and God tells us, that he never said to the Seed of Jacob, *Seek ye me in vain, Isa. 45. 19.* Indeed, God is not wanting to his People in the Use of Means: *The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the Soul that seeks him, Lam. 3. 26.* Ordinarily God will not communi-

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cate himself and his Love any other Way ; and that Soul that neglects this, puts himself out of the Way of the Manifestations and Communications of God and his Love: Indeed, God has, as it were, tied himself to Souls under a conscientious Use of Means to do them good : *Ask, and you shall receive ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you : For every one that asketh, receiveth ; and every one that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it is opened :* As you therefore value Communion with God, and the Manifestations of his Love, take heed of laying aside the Use of Means. — (Thirdly) Consider, that these things we call Means, such as Prayer, Hearing, and the like, are Instances of our Homage, Worship, and Obedience, to God ; hereby we worship God, and give so far the Glory to him that is due unto his Name ; and consequently to cast off these, is to cast off the *Worship* of God, and to deny we owe Homage to him. Lay all these together, and our Proposition is clear, that God's Unchangeableness does no way exclude or invalidate the Use of Means ; and when we use Means, 'tis not to change, but fulfil, the Mind of God ; 'tis not to alter, but to accomplish, his Counsels, and bring us into the Fruition of them. Thus by these Propositions I have vindicated the Unchangeableness of God from Cavil and Contradiction, and it remains a Truth, that the Lord Jehovah is an unchangeable God.

C H A P. VI.

Several Doctrinal Corollaries or Deductions from the Consideration of God's Unchangeableness.

HAVING thus far asserted, opened, and vindicated, the Unchangeableness of God, our

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next Work shall be to deduce some useful Corollaries or Conclusions thence ; and indeed many things of Weight, and very momentous to us, may be drawn from what has been said. As,

1. See here the Glorious Excellency and Perfection of God, and that he is infinitely distinguished from all the Creatures in Dignity and Glory. God, my Beloved, is every way above, and distinguished from the Creatures ; He is *the Excellent Glory*, 2 Pet. 1. 17. and there is hardly any thing wherein his Glorious Excellency and Perfection does more brightly, illustriously, and transcendently, appear and shine forth, than in his Unchangeableness. The Creatures are all changeable one way or other ; the Heavens and the Earth, with all the Furniture of the one and the other, are changeable ; *they shall perish, yea, all of them shall wax old like a Garment, and be changed as a Vesture*, Psal. 102. 26. The Day is coming wherein ~~all these~~ *shall be dissolved*, 2 Pet. 3. 10, 11. Men also they are changeable, they indeed are Changeableness it self, as it were ; they are changeable in their Nature, and changeable in their Condition ; changeable in their Spirits, and changeable in their Ways ; changeable in their Counsels, and changeable in their Comforts ; changeable in all they are ; *unstable as Water*, as 'tis said of Reuben, Gen. 49. 4. Great Men are changeable, Psal. 62. 9. Yea, good Men are changeable, the best Men are changeable, the best Men at their best in this World are changeable ; *Verily, every Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity* ; (that is, subject to change) Ps. 39. 5. Men are not to Day what they were Yesterday, nor will they be to Morrow what they are to Day ; yea, Men are to Day, and to Morrow they are not ; so changeable are they. Yea, the Angels, the Blessed Angels themselves, are changeable ; God *puts no Trust in his Saints, and his Angels he charges* with

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with Folly, Job 4, 18. that is, with possible, though not actual, Folly; with Change and Folly in their Nature, though not in their Condition: There is, my Beloved, a Peccability in the very Angels, I mean in their Nature: The best of Creatures, in themselves, are subject to the worst of Changes; the Glorious Angels are in their Nature capable of sinning; indeed, in their Condition they are not, being confirmed in, both all Holiness and all Happiness, by the Grace of the Second Covenant, but in their Nature they are: Hence that Saying of one of the School-men, *Whatever Creature there is that is impeccable, and cannot sin, he has not this from himself, or in his Nature, but from the Gift of free Grace.* Thus all the Creatures are changeable, but God is unchangeable, he is for ever the same. And O how Glorious does this speak him to be! And how does it distinguish him from all the Creatures in Perfection and Glory? The Truth is, this is a Glorious Excellency and Perfection in it self, and this puts a Lustre and Glory upon the Excellencies and Perfections of God; for *this* (as one speaks) *is an Attribute, which like the Silken String through the Chain of Pearl, runs through all the rest, and puts a Glory upon all.* God's Holiness would not be half so Glorious, were it not unchangeable Holiness; his Love would not be half so sweet, were it not unchangeable Love; his Justice and Wrath would not be half so terrible, were it not unchangeable Justice and Wrath: Indeed, what were any of all his Attributes in Comparison, were they not unchangeable? O! let us learn to see and adore God in this Glorious Excellency and Perfection of his.

2. From the Consideration of God's Unchangeableness we conclude the transcendent Excellency of Spiritual Things beyond Carnal, Heavenly Things beyond Earthly; and accordingly we should

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should prize and pursue the one and the other. This take for an eternal Rule, That the nearer things come to God, and the more they resemble him, and partake of him, the more excellent and desirable they are. Indeed, as God is the Fountain, so he is the Measure and Standard of all true Worth and Excellency; and here is nothing that has any real Worth or Excellency in it, any further than it resembles him, and partakes of him. Now what things do most resemble God, and partake of God? Are they Spiritual or Carnal, Heavenly or Earthly? Surely Spiritual and Heavenly things; God is unchangeable, and so in their kind are these: As for Carnal and Earthly things they are fading and changeable, the best of them are *Treasures which Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and which Thieves do break through and steal*, Mat. 6. 19. They are all fading, dying, transient, things: *The World passeth away*, (says Saint John) 1 Joh. 2. 17. that is, fleeting and perishing. 'Tis a good Observation which Calvin has upon these Words, *Because* (says he) *in the World there is nothing but what is fading, and, as it were, but for a Moment, the Apostle thence concludes, how ill they consult and provide for themselves, who carve out to themselves their Happiness here, especially when God calls us to the Blessed Glory of Eternal Life; and 'tis as if he should say, The true Happiness which God offers to his Children is Eternal, and therefore most unworthy is it in us to incumber our selves with this World; which, together with all its good things, will anon vanish away.* Pray let us lay this Observation to Heart, *The World passeth away*; that is, Riches, Honours, and Pleasures, they all fade and change, are short-lived: Alas! how soon many times do Riches change into Poverty, Pleasure into Pain, Honour into Disgrace and Contempr, Friends into Enemies, Fulness into Want? There is no Stability

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in any of these things, they are subject to change every Moment: But now Spiritual and Heavenly things they are lasting and durable, they are *Treasures which neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, nor can Thieves break through and steal them*, Mat. 6.

20. The Riches of this World are *uncertain Riches*, vanishing, disappearing, Riches, 1 Tim. 6. 17. But the Riches of Heaven, and the Covenant of God's Love, are certain, durable, and abiding, Riches. Grace is a durable thing, the Righteousness of Christ is a durable, unchangeable, Thing; Pardon, Justification, Acceptation with God through that Righteousness, are durable things; Union and Communion with God through Christ, these are unchangeable, these live and last for ever, where attained; and being so, they do come nearer God, they more resemble him, and partake more of him, than Carnal and Earthly things do, and so are more excellent than they, and should be accordingly prized by us. O, my Beloved, there is more true Worth and Excellency in one Dram of Grace, one Beam of Holiness, one Hint of the Pardon of Sin, one Sight of God's reconciled Face, one Imbrace in the Bosom of his Love, than there is in a World of Carnal Comforts and Contentments; and accordingly we should prize and affect them, our Eye and Heart should be taken off from the one, and fixt upon the other. But alas! alas! we are apt to dote upon these changeable things here below: O how fond are we of, and how passionately for the most part are we carried out after, Carnal, Earthly, Sensible, things? But how cold are we in our Love to, and Pursuits after, things Spiritual and Heavenly? As if indeed Earthly, and not Heavenly, things were the only things of Weight and Moment; whereas indeed the one hath no Worth, no Glory, in them, in Comparison of the Glory which excelleth: Let us there-

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fore with the Holy Apostle *not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal,* 2 Cor. 4. 18. Mark, the Apostle did not think Carnal and Earthly things worth a Cast of his Eye, because they are temporal, changeable; but Spiritual things, which are durable and eternal, these he counted worthy of his Eye, his Heart, and all. O, let us measure the Worth of things by their Resemblance to God, and what they do partake of him.

3. Behold here, as in a Glass, the notorious Folly and Madnes of such as prefer the Creature before God, in their Choice and Affections, placing their Happiness in it, and not in him. *Many* (not one, or two, or a few, but *many*) say, *Who will shew us any Good?* And what Good is it they would have shewn them? *Corn, Wine, Oyl,* Psal. 4. 6. Creature-good, Sensible-good, Good to feed and fill a sensual Appetite; and indeed this is the Good which the most of Men prefer in their Choice and Affections before God, placing the Rest and Happiness of their Souls therein: The Generality of Men have high Thoughts of the Creature, and low Thoughts of God; great Affections for the Creature, and small Affections for God: 'Tis but here and there one that does truly and indeed carry his Happiness above the Road of Creatures, and place it in God: Take the most of Men, and 'tis the Creature they Love, 'tis the Creature they prize, 'tis the Creature they chuse, and 'tis the Creature they take up their Rest and Happiness in; as for God they will have none of him; as God complained of them of old, *Israel would none of me,* Psal. 81. 11. In a Word, God and the Creatures share the Hearts and Affections of the whole World between them; God renders himself to Men as the Rest and Happiness of their Souls,

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Souls; and accordingly to be loved, to be prized, to be chosen, to be delighted in by them; on the other Hand, the Creatures they tender themselves to Men in like manner, and both plead for Acceptation; and which, I pray, carries it, God or the Creature? Truly the Creature with the most: Alas! we are carnal, and sensual, and do naturally incline to carnal and sensual things, embracing them to the Neglect of God, and so the Creature is preferred before God: Oh what Folly and Madness is this! To prefer the Creature before God in our Choice and Affections, is not only to prefer Emptiness before Fulness, Nothingness before Sufficiency; but 'tis also to prefer Vanity before Immutability, and Variableness before Unchangeableness; and Oh, what Folly, what Madness, is this! To prefer the Creature before God in our Choice and Affections, is to prefer a broken Cistern, that can hold no Water, before a Fountain of Living Waters. So God himself speaks of it, and withal brands it for a black and horrid Evil, *Jer. 2. 12, 13.* an Evil which he calls upon the Heavens to be astonished at, and the Earth to be horribly afraid because of. O, my Beloved, to prefer a Cistern before a Fountain; a poor, narrow, scanty, borrowed, Good, before a full, ample, original, all-sufficient, Good; a Drop before an Ocean of Goodness and Sweetness, this is great Folly; but to prefer a broken Cistern, and a broken Cistern that can hold no Water, before a Fountain of Living Waters, fleeting Nothingness before unchangeable Fulness, this is greater Folly, Folly even to Madness; and yet this is the Folly of the most of Men. Carnal Men are often in *Scripture* called Fools, and their Folly appears in nothing more than this, namely, their preferring changeable Creatures before an unchangeable God; and indeed, than this what greater Folly can there be? In

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Luke 12. 19. we read of one that talked to his Soul, saying, *Soul, eat, drink, and be merry, for thou hast much Goods laid up for thee for many Years, take thine Ease :* Pray mark, he had never a Word of God in his Mouth, and (as we may safely conclude) never a Thought of God in his Heart; but he was wholly taken up with his Barns, and Goods, and Treasures; and yet he bids his Soul to take its Ease, to sit down at Rest; God was as nothing with him, and the Creature was all: Well, what Title does Christ give him? Does he give him the Title of a wise Man? No, *Thou Fool,* (says he.) Christ calls him *Fool*, as well he might; for what greater Folly than this, to be wholly taken up with perishing Creatures, and neglect and forget an unchangeable God? Yea, and to bid his Soul take its Ease too, because he abounded with Creature-enjoyments: Indeed, had he said, *Soul, take thine Ease, be Merry, thou hast Heavenly Treasures laid up in Abundance for thee; God is thine, Christ is thine, the Blessed Spirit the Comforter is thine, Heaven and Eternal Life is thine,* this had been something like; but to have his Heart taken up with carnal things altogether, preferring them before God, and to bid his Soul to rest and be merry upon the Account of these, this is Folly with a Witnes; and who deserves the Name of a Fool, if he did not? What shall I say? This, namely, to prefer the Creature before God, is such Folly as will at last expose to Shame and Contempt for ever all that are guilty of it, and such as are even hung up in Chains for the highest Instances of Folly and Madnes: *Lo,* (says the *Psalmist*) *this is the Man that made not God his Strength, but trusted in the Abundance of his Riches, &c. Psal. 52. 7.* *Lo,* this is the Man that preferred the Creature before God, that made Riches, not God, his Portion; this is that Fool, that very

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Fool, that mad Man; yea, and whoever they are that do this, they will at last (though perhaps too late) see and find themselves to be Fools: *At his end* (says the Prophet concerning such an one) *he shall be a Fool*, Jer. 17. 11. *at his end he shall be a Fool!* What, was he a wise Man in his Beginning and Progress? No, he was a Fool all along; yet though he was a Fool, he thought himself wise: But at last he shall see his Folly, he shall find that he was a very Fool indeed; and O how will the Sight of such Folly then vex and torment him? O, Sirs, when you shall see your selves lanching forth into an unchangeable State, as shortly you will, how will you then condemn your selves of Folly, for preferring changeable Creatures before an unchangeable God? Let me therefore speak to each of you, as in Prov. 23. 5. *Wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not? Riches make to themselves Wings, &c. Cease from thine own Wisdom, labour not to be Rich;* Men think it to be their highest Wisdom to get Riches; but, Sirs, know assuredly, this is Folly; the only Wisdom is to make sure of God, and get an Interest in God; Riches are not, but God always is, and he is the same for ever.

4. From God's Unchangeableness we infer the absolute Necessity of a Change in Sinners, if ever they be happy, if ever they be saved. My Beloved, if ever Sinners be saved, and made eternally happy, there must be a Change either in God or them; now in God there can be no Change, the Change therefore must be in them: 'Tis a rational and undeniable Way of arguing, for a Sinner to argue and say, God is unchangeable; and because God is unchangeable; I must change or perish, change or die, change or be miserable for ever: For pray mark, God never did, and he never will, save any Man in his Sins; he is in Christ infinitely willing, ready, and able, to save Men

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from their Sins; he sent and seal'd his Son on purpose to save Men from their Sins, and accordingly gave him a Name suitable hereunto, even *Jesus*, which signifies a Saviour, *Thou shalt call his Name Jesus, for he shall save his People from their Sins, Mat. 1. 21.* But he never did, and unless he should change, he never will, save any in their Sins; without a Change therefore in us and upon us we are undone for ever. But a little further, yet to let you see the Force of this Inference, and the Rationality of such an arguing, that so it may fall with the greater Weight and Conviction upon all our Sou's, be pleased to consider that 'tis utterly repugnant to, and inconsistent with, the Word, Nature, Counsel, and Oath, of God, to save Sinners without a Change; for all these are absolutely and expressly against the Happiness and Salvation of unchanged Souls, Souls remaining still in their Sins, still in their natural State.

1. The Word of God is against the Happiness and Salvation of unchanged Souls; the Word of God says expressly, that without a Change Men may not, shall not, cannot, be saved; the Word of God says, *The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God, Psal. 9. 17.* The Word of God says, *that into the Holy City there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth or worketh Abomination, Rev. 21. 27.* The Word of God says, *That the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9.* The Word of God says, *That without Holiness no Man shall see God, Heb. 12. 14.* And lest all this should be thought to concern only profane and licentious ones, let me add, the Word of God says, - that *Flesh and Blood*, that is, Men in their natural Estate, cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, *1 Cor. 15. 50.* Yea, the Word of God says, and that with an Emphasis, that *except a Man be born again, unless he be regenerated*

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by the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Joh. 3. 3, 5. *Verily, verily, (says Christ) except a Man be born again, &c. and again, Verily, verily, he asserts it over and over, which notes, among other things, as the Weight of the Truth asserted, so our Difficulty and Averseness to believe it, and bow to it: Thus the Word of God is against this thing.*

2. The Nature of God is against the Happiness and Salvation of unchanged Souls; the Nature of God is Infinitely Pure and Holy, and will not admit of Sinners to dwell with him: *Thou art not a God that hath Pleasure in Wickedness, (says the Psalmist) neither shall Evil dwell with thee, Psal. 5. 4. The Foolish (and such are all Men by Nature) shall not stand in thy Sight; thou hatest all the Workers of Iniquity, v. 5. So Heb. 1. 13. Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and canst not look on Iniquity;* that is, without Loathing and Detestation: God's Nature is Holy, yea, 'tis Holiness it self, and he can as soon cease to be God, as cease to be Holy; his Nature is infinitely contrary to all Sin, and he infinitely, necessarily, and eternally, hates all Sin; Sin indeed is strictly and properly the only Object of God's Hatred: His Love is let out upon many Objects, but Sin is the only Object of his Hatred; and is not the Nature of this God against the Salvation of unchanged Sinners? God must first cease to be infinitely Holy, and so to be God, e'er Sinners remaining in their unchanged State can be saved.

3. The Counsel of God is against the Salvation of unchanged Sou's; the Law of the Counsel of God is, That we must be holy if ever we will be happy; that we must be called, justified, and sanctified, if ever we be glorified; so you find in that Golden Chain, (as 'tis called) Rom. 8. 29, 30. *Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed*

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conformed unto the Image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Mark, the Counsel, or as 'tis here called, the Fore-knowledge, of God, tells us, we must be changed, called, and justified, if ever we be glorified. So expressly, *2 Thes. 2. 13. God hath chosen us to Salvation*: But how? Is there no need of a Change? Yes, he hath so chosen us, as calls for a Change; *He hath chosen us to Salvation, through the Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth*: Yea, the Counsel of God aims at Holiness; and designs us primarily unto Holiness; *He hath chosen us that we should be holy, Eph. 1. 4, 5.* God must change all his Counsels which have been of old, or Sinners must be changed, if ever they be saved.

4. The Oath of God is against the Salvation of unchanged Sinners: God's Oath is gone out of his Mouth, that no unbelieving, unchanged, ones, shall ever enter into his Rest: *So I swear in my Wrath they shall not enter into my Rest, Heb. 3. 11.* Thus God's Word, his Nature, his Counsel, his Oath, are all against the Happiness and Salvation of unchanged Sinners; and God must change in all, if ever they be saved without a Change: But God can change in neither; the Change must be in them; God being unchangeable, they must change or die, change or perish; and there must be a double Change pass upon them, or they cannot be saved; a Change of their Estate, and a Change of their Image; a Change of their State in Justification by the Blood of Christ, and a Change of their Image in Regeneration and Sanctification by the Spirit of Christ; and without both these they are undone for ever.

1. There must be a Change of their State in Justification through Christ's Blood, if ever they be saved. When a poor Soul is justified freely by Grace, through

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through the Redemption that is in Jesus, as the Apostle expresses it, *Rom. 3. 24.* when his Sins are once pardoned, and his Person accepted with God by the Imputation of Christ's perfect Righteousness to him, through believing, then is his State changed, and this Change of State Sinners must pass under, or God being unchangeable, they cannot be saved; they must, through the Blood and Righteousness of Christ applied and appropriated in a way of believing, get their Sins pardoned, and their Persons accepted; they must get all Guilt removed, and all Debts paid, or they cannot possibly be saved; this is frequently mentioned in Scripture, *Rom. 5. 1.* *Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:* Again, *v. 9.* *Being justified through his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath by him:* Again, *v. 17, 18, 19.* *If by one Man's Offence Death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life by one, Jesus Christ:* Therefore, as by the Offence of one Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; so by the Obedience of one shall many be made Righteous. Still you see Justification through the Blood and Righteousness of Christ is necessary unto Life and Salvation. So *Eph. 1. 6, 7.* *God hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins:* The like is held forth, *1 Cor. 6. 10.* *Rom. 8. 30.* Oh, without Pardon and Justification through the Blood of Christ, there is no Life, no Salvation, to be expected for Sinners: Unpardoned Sin will surely damn, and no Pardon is to be had for Sinners but in and by Christ, and Union with Christ, through believing. When once a Soul is pardoned and justified by Christ through believing, then he is passed from Death to Life, as you have it, *Joh. 5. 24.* but till then he remains in Death, and under Death and Condemnation. 2. There

2. There must be a Change of their Image in Regeneration and Sanctification by the Spirit of Christ. When a Sinner is new born, *born of Water and of the Spirit*, as Christ's Expression is, when he is made a new Creature, old things being past away with him, and all things being become new, as the Apostle phrases it, 2 Cor. 5. 17. when he is created in Christ Jesus, and has a sound Work of Grace wrought and carried on in him by the Spirit of Christ, then is his Image changed, and such a Change of Image must Sinners pass under; or they cannot be saved: God never did, and never will, save an unrenewed Soul, his Unchangeableness will not admit of the Salvation of such an one; and indeed the Scripture is full in it, *Joh. 3. 3, 5. Verily, verily, (says Christ to Nicodemus) except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God: And again, vers. 5. Verily, verily, (says he) except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* You see this is what Christ asserts, and that over and over, and with the highest Asseverations imaginable: Hence also Heaven is said to be *the Inheritance of Saints*, Col. 1. 12: and of *sanctified Ones*, Acts 26. 18. Hence the *Corinthians* are said to be *sanctified* as well as *justified*, and so made capable of inheriting the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 10, 11, and Tit. 3. 5. God is said, according to his Mercy to save us, by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Thus there must a Change of Image as well as State pass upon us, or we cannot be saved; and that because God is unchangeable: Oh, how should we all therefore look after this Change? Soul, assure thy self, 'tis not thy Civility and Morality, how much soever raised and refined, 'tis not thy external Reformati-
ons, 'tis not thy conforming thy self to the outward Rules and Laws of Duty, and the like, that

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will save thee, or avail thee any thing as to eternal Life, unless thou comest under this double Change, of which thou hast heard. *Paul*, I am confident, could compare with thee for Morality and external Conformity to the Law, when yet he was in a lost Estate; and afterwards coming to Faith in Christ, he sees Cause to account all but as *Loss and Dung*, *Phil. 3. begin.* And he that came to Christ, (of whom we read in *Mat. 19. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.*) had certainly attained to a great Degree of Morality, and external Conformity to the Law, who yet was lacking, and so far lacking, as that, for any thing we find, he fell eternally short of Heaven and Salvation. Oh, there must a Change, a Change of State, and a Change of Image, pass upon us, or our Morality will leave us at last to perish: Let us therefore mind this Change: Am I changed or no? Changed I must be, and that with a great Change, with a Change of State, and a Change of Person, or I cannot be saved; have I therefore any Acquaintance with such a Change? O, my Beloved, let Unchangeableness in God ingage us all to look out after a Change in us; God will not change to save any of us all; he is willing to change us that we may be saved, but he himself will not change to save any of us.

5. Again, from what has been declared touching God's Unchangeableness, we conclude and infer the infinite Sweetness of his Love, and the infinite Bitterness of his Wrath, and so the exceeding Happiness of such as are interested in the one, and the extream Misery of such as fall under the other. Sinners slight God's Love, preferring Creature-love before it; and they disregard his Wrath, wilfully provoking it against themselves; but if they will view the one and the other, in the Glass of his Unchangeableness, they will find that there

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is more Sweetness in the one than that it should be slighted; and more Terribleness in the other, than that it should be disregarded.

I. From God's Unchangeableness we conclude and infer the Infinite Sweetness of his Love, and so the Happiness of them that are interested in it. God has a People whom he loves, and his Love to them is a free Love, a rich Love, a peculiar Love, a Love of singular Eminency and Perfection in all Respects: But that which indeed crowns all, and puts an infinite Sweetness into it, is this, that 'tis an unchangeable Love, a Love that never fades, never varies: True, his Love may be, and sometimes is, veiled and clouded; but tho' it be veiled, yet 'tis not varied; though it be sometimes clouded, yet 'tis never changed: Love, under a Vail or Cloud, is Love. The Sun may be under a Cloud, yea, there may be an Eclipse upon it for a time, which may keep it out of our View, and deprive us of the comfortable Influences and Shinings of it for a Season; but yet even then the Sun is in Being, and after a while in will shine again, and that as sweetly, brightly, and comfortably, as ever. So there may be a Vail, a Cloud, an Eclipse, as it were, upon God's Love, such as may deprive us for a time of the comfortable Views, Shinings, and Influences, of it: But yet even then 'tis Love, and sweet Love too, and after a while it will shine and shew it self again. 'Tis a sweet Word which you have, *Psal. 30. 5. His Anger endureth but a Moment; in his Favour is Life: Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy comes in the Morning: In his Favour is Life.* Life here (as a Judicious Interpreter observes) is opposed to a Moment, mentioned in the Beginning of the Verse; and so the Sense is, that that Love, wherewith God loves his People, lasts throughout all Life, it lives and lasts for ever, 'tis a durable, abiding, Love: So

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So *Isa. 54. 8.* In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a Moment; (says God to his Church) but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee. Thus I say, though God's Love to his People may be veiled, yet 'tis never varied, 'tis a constant Love, and Oh how sweet does this speak his Love to be, and how happy are they that are interested in it? Oh, to be beloved by an unchangeable God, with an unchangeable Love, this is sweet indeed! The Creature's Love has little Worth or Sweetness in it, and that not only because of its Weakness and Emptiness, but also because of its Changeableness: Alas! The Creature loves to Day, and hates to Morrow; Oh, but now God's Love is another manner of Love, a Love that has Fullness and Firmness, Sufficiency and Immurability, both in it; and accordingly must needs be infinitely sweet and desirable: Well therefore might *David* admiringly cry out as he did, *Psal. 36. 7.* How excellent or how precious is thy Loving-kindness, O Lord? And as in *Psal. 63. 3.* Thy Loving-kindness is better than Life: 'Tis before all Lives; one Dram of it is to be preferred before many Worlds of Creature-enjoyments. God's Love, it is all Good, all Comfort, all Happiness, in its Fountain-fullness and Purity; it is an eternal, never-failing, Spring of Sweetness, an unvariable Fountain of Delight; in it there is Grace, all Grace; Peace, all Peace; Joy, all Joy; Satisfaction, all Satisfaction; Rest and Solace, all Rest and Solace: O, Soul, look upon the Love of thy God to thee, look upon it, and in it thou wilt see unsearchable Riches, unmeasurable Fullness, unfathomable Depths, and (which crowns all) eternal Unchangeableness; and Oh how happy wilt thou therein see thy self! With what full Consolation of Spirit mayest thou sit down and say, God loves me, and he loves me unchangeably. Friends change, outward Comforts change,

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I my self change; but God's Love to me changes not; I am for ever upon his Heart, nor can either Men or Devils, Sins or Sorrows, cast me out of it. True, he sometimes afflicts me, but yet he loves me; he sometimes frowns upon me, but yet he loves me; he sometimes seems to slay me, he breaks me with Breach upon Breach, but yet he loves me; he confines me to a Sick-chamber, he lays me upon a Sick-bed, he seems to resolve to lay me in the Dust, but yet he loves me; yea, all this is in Love: I break with him, and depart from him, I am sinning against him every Day and Hour, but yet he loves me, he loves me notwithstanding all, his Love cannot be broken off from me, and after a while I shall bathe in the Fountain thereof for ever. Oh sweet! Who would not long for this Love? He loves me unchangeably, and he will therefore cleanse me, purifie me, pardon me, make me perfectly Holy: He loves me, and he will love me, till he has lodged me in his own *Presence* and *Bosom* above, and there he will love me for ever.

2. From God's Unchangeableness, we conclude and infer the Infinite Bitterness of his Wrath, and the extream Misery of all such as fall under the Weight thereof. God's Love is not more sweet than his Wrath is bitter, his Love is not more desirable than his Wrath is formidable, and that because he is an unchangeable God; and Oh how miserable must they be that do fall under this Wrath. In *Isa. 10. 6.* we read of *the People of God's Wrath*: There are some then that are properly *the People of God's Wrath*, they are *Children of Wrath*, *Heirs of Wrath*; and Wrath, yea, God's Wrath, will be their Portion for ever; such are all finally impenitent and unbelieving Oaes, all who live and die in their Impenitency and Unbelief; and Oh how extreamly miserable must they be!

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be ! God's Wrath is a *Great Wrath, a Fierce Wrath, a Sore Wrath, a Powerful Wrath, an Irresistable Wrath, a Burning, Consuming, and Devouring, Wrath*; so the Scripture speaks of it: All which speaks the exceeding Bitterness and Terribleness of it, and the extream Misery of such as fall under it; but that which adds even infinitely to all this, that 'tis eternal and unchangeable Wrath, Wrath that abides for ever: Hence 'tis set forth in Scripture by *unquenchable Fire*, *Mat. 3. 12.* God's Wrath is called *Fire*, because of its exceeding Heat and Fierceness, being of a consuming and devouring Nature; and 'tis called *unquenchable Fire*, because 'tis durable and unchangeable, it being what admits of no more Change or Period than his Love does; and to fall under this unquenchable Fire, under the Revelation of this eternal, unchangeable, Wrath, - Oh how sad, how miserable, must this be? *Solomon* tells us, that *the Wrath of a King is as the Roaring of a Lion*, *Prov. 19. 12.* and what then, and how terrible, is the Wrath of God, to whose Wrath the Wrath of all the Kings on the Earth is as nothing? We are afraid sometimes of Man's Wrath, yea, so afraid of it, as to suffer our selves to be driven from our Duty by it: But, my Beloved, what is the Wrath of a Man to the Wrath of God? What is the Wrath of a changeable Man to the Wrath of an unchangeable God? Let me say to each Soul of you, as God by the Prophet to them, *Isa. 51. 12, 13.* *Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a Man that shall die, (a changeable Creature) and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?* 'Tis but a little while, and Man and his Wrath both shall change and die, but God and his Wrath will live for ever: O, learn to fear and tremble at his Wrath, and beware how for a little fading, changeable, Delight in Sin, you throw your selves under unchangeable Wrath and Fury: Poor Sinner,

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Sinner, thou makest light of God's Wrath, as if it were an inconsiderable thing ; witness thy wilful and daily Provoking of it against thee by Sin ; witness thy Insensibleness of and under the Tokens and Revelations of it ; witness thy Neglect of Christ, and of making thy Peace with God by him, and the like : But, Soul, view it in the Glass of his infinite Unchangeableness, and then see whether it be a thing to be made light of or no ; the Saints they tremble but in the Apprehension of it ; *Who knows the Power of thine Anger ?* says Moses, *Psal. 90. 11.* They sigh, they bleed, they groan, yea, they die, and are even distracted under a little temporal Sprinklings and Droppings of it, *Psal. 88. 15, 16.* yea, they dread and tremble many times at but the Revelation of it against others ; *I was afraid* (says Moses) *of the Anger and hot Displeasure wherewith the Lord was wrath against you, to destroy you, Deut. 9. 19.* Moses could condemn the Wrath of Man, yea, of Man whose Wrath of all Men is most terrible, the Wrath of a King, *Heb. 11. 27.* but yet he trembles at the Wrath of God, when 'twas provoked against others ; thus the Saints tremble at God's Wrath : Yea, more, the Devils themselves do dread and tremble at God's Wrath ; *The Devils believe and tremble, Jam. 2. 19.* they believe there is a God, and they tremble at the Apprehension of the Wrath of that God. And, Sinner, whoever thou art, how light soever thou mayest now make of God's Wrath, yet know that there is a time coming when thou and the stoutest Sinners in the World must and will tremble at it. See that one Text, *Isa. 33. 14.* *The Sinners in Zion are afraid, Fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrite :* Why, what is the matter ? Verily nothing but the Sight and Apprehension of God's Wrath and Vengeance coming upon them ; so much the following Words shew ; *Who among us shall dwell with de-*

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devouring Fire? Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting Burnings? They saw God's Wrath to be as a devouring Fire; they saw the Terror of it in the Glass of God's Unchangeableness, and therefore call it everlasting Burnings; and this filled them with Dread and Trembling. Take one Place more, Rev. 6. 15, 16, 17. in vers. 16, 17. we find some crying out to the Mountains and Rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the Face of him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb; for (say they) the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Well, but who are they that thus cry out? Surely they are only a Company of low-spirited Creatures, thinkest thou, they are only some Women and Children, or some base cowardly Ones, that never had the Spirit and Courage of Men: No, Soul, they are no such Persons, they are the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men, and every Bond-man, and every Free-man; all Sorts of Men, Men of the highest Place, the highest Estates, the highest Courage and Valour, as well as others; these all are said to hide themselves in the Dens and in the Rocks of the Mountains, and call unto the Mountains and Rocks, saying, Fall on us. Oh, but we shall fall heavy; no matter, fall on us; but to what Purpose? Why, to hide us from the Wrath of God; why, what is the Matter? Are you afraid of the Wrath of God? Time was you slighted and disregarded it as an inconsiderable thing, and do you so dread it now, and tremble at it now, that you cry to us Rocks and Mountains to fall on you, to hide you from it? Oh yes, good Rocks, good Mountains, fall on us, you will lye light and easie upon us in Comparison of what the Wrath of God will do. How? Why should you think so? You had other Thoughts of God's Wrath a while ago, why do you

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you so dread it and tremble at it now? O, because *the great Day of his Wrath is come, and none can stand before it*, say they: We lookt on this Wrath a while ago at a Distance, and then it seemed a light thing; but now *the Day, yea, the great Day, of his Wrath is come*, and there is no standing for us: While we lookt at it at a Distance, we could stand before it, and make light of it; yea, in some lesser Days of Wrath we have born up well enough; but now his Wrath is come near us, yea, and the Fulness and Fierceness of it is breaking forth against us; now we see this Wrath to be more dreadful and formidable, and that we can never stand up either under it or against it: Say ye so, reply the Rocks and Mountains, then no wonder you cry to us to hide you from it; but truly 'tis more than we can do for you, you must now bear and grapple with that Wrath for ever, as to any Relief we can afford you in the Case. O Sinner! when the great Day of God's Wrath shall come, then, if not before, thou also wilt tremble at his Wrath: Indeed now wouldest thou see it, and tremble at it, thou mightest cry to a Rock that could and would hide thee from it, provided thou gettest into it; I mean *Christ, that Rock of Ages*; he being embraced by Faith, and thy Soul having Union with him, would hide and secure thee against the Wrath of God for ever; but if thou wilt go on to make light of this Wrath, and to provoke it daily against thee by Sin, thou wilt at last sink under the Weight and Burthen thereof for ever.

6. In the Glass of God's Unchangeableness we see the true Reason why the best of us all are not consumed, and accordingly let us give the Glory of it where 'tis due. Beloved, why are you, and I, and others, not consumed? True, we meet with some Afflictions, and are exercised with some

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Difficulties now and then, but why are we not utterly consumed and destroyed? Verily, 'tis not because we are able to save our selves, nor is it because we deserve that God should save us, but 'tis purely and solely because our God is unchangeable: This Account the Text it self gives of it; *I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed:* All our Security lyes in God's Immutability, we perish not, because he changes not: Pray give me leave a little to be free with you and my self, why are we not consumed with an external Consumption? We are sorely broken many of us, 'tis true, we are broken in our Estates, in our Healths, in our Comforts, in our Relations, but why are we not utterly destroyed? Why are we alive? Why have we any one Comfort about us? Yea more, why are we not consumed with an eternal Consumption? Why are the best of us all not in Hell? Why are we not flated in an Eternity of Woe and Misery? Why are we not now roaring and sweltering under the Wrath of God? Why are we not Companions with Devils and damned Spirits in everlasting Burnings? Is it because our Sins are few and small, and have not deserved it? No surely; why then is it? Because our God is unchangeable, unchangeable in Being, Counsel, Covenant, and Love. Oh! my Beloved, if we seriously consider what we are, and how we have carried it, what our Sins and Provocations have been, and how high they rise against the Blessed God, and the like, we may well wonder we are out of Hell, that we have a Being any where on this side the Pit of Perdition; nor can we resolve it into any other Cause but God's Unchangeableness: Let me therefore entreat you to consider things a little, that you may give Glory where 'tis due.

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1. Consider what you are, I mean as to your Nature and the Depravedness of it: You are a meer Lump and Mass of Sin; *Enemies, yea, Enmity it self against God and Christ, Rom. 8. 7.* your Heart is a meer Sink, a Fountain, an Abyss, of Sin and Wickedness against God: *The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* None but God can look to the Bottom of that Sin, Wickedness, and Deceit, that is in your Heart, *Jer. 17. 9.* O the Aboundings of Sin that are found in the best of us! Oh, the Pride, the Passion, the Earthliness, the Sensuality, the Uncleaness, the Unbelief, the Hypocrisy, the Atheism, the Disregard of God, the Aversion from all Good, that dwells, works, wars, and oftentimes prevails and predominates, in the Hearts of the best Saints, while here! O the Rifings of Sin, and Oh the Aboundings of Iniquity, that are found among us!

2. Consider what you have done, and how you have carried it God-ward: If you seriously consider things, you will find, I fear, that you have done, and to this Day do, little else but sin against the Lord: You have despised his Goodness, abused his Love, violated his Laws, trampled upon his Authority, grieved his Spirit, wounded his Son, darkened his Glory, and oftentimes struck even at his very Crown and Being; yea, and *this hath been your manner from your Youth,* (as God charged them of old, *Jer. 22. 21.*) there is not that Day, nor scarcely that Hour, wherein you have not, and do not, sin against God: Often have you made him serve with your Sins, and wearied him with your Iniquities, as those, *Isa. 43. 24.* Your Lives have been Lives of Sin for the most part against God.

3. Consider what black and horrid Aggravations your Sins are cloathed with; are not your Sins, my Beloved, of a Scarlet Dye, and Crimson Tinture?

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sure? Are they not heightened with many black and crying Aggravations? Have they not, at least many of them, been committed against much Love, much Light, much Mercy, many Motions of the Spirit, many Checks of Conscience, many Bonds and Obligations to Duty, many signal and eminent Appearances, of God to you, and for you; many Tastes, many Sealings, of his Love, and the like? What shall I say? Such every way are our Sins, yea, the Sins of the best of us all, that we cannot possibly look to the further end of them. *Who can understand his Errors?* (says Holy David, Psalm 19. 12.) *David was an Holy Man, a Man after God's own Heart, and yet he cries out, Who can understand his Errors?* His Sins were beyond Search or Understanding; and if his were so, what are ours? Truly, my Beloved, our Sins in the Number, Nature, and Aggravations, of them, are beyond our Reach, and well may we all with him cry out, *Who can understand his Errors?*

4. Consider what an infinite Evil and Demerit there is in every Sin, even the least Sin? As you are guilty of so much Sin, and your Sins clothed many of them with so many and such crying Aggravations, so you must know that there is Evil enough in the least Sin to damn you eternally, should God render the Desert thereof to you: *The Wages of Sin is Death*, (says the Apostle) Rom. 6. 23. Mark, he speaks of Sin indefinitely, every Sin, the least Sin; and, says he, *the Wages*, that which is due to it, *is Death*: Every Sin is an Offence against God, 'tis infinitely contrary to his Purity and Holiness, his Will and Glory, his Life and Being; 'tis universally contrary to him, and so must needs have an inconceivable Evil and Demerit in it: Every Offence (says a Learned Man) against the chief Good, deserves the utmost Punishment, even the eternal Destruction of the Creature.

O,
Sirs,

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Sirs, we little think the Evil there is in a vain Thought, an idle Word, an unholy, irregular, Action : We little think the Evil the least Sin carries in it.

5. Consider how much God hates Sin : Sin is even infinitely odious and abominable to him, *God is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity,* to wit, without Loathing and Detestation, *Hab. 1. 13.* and he is once and again in Scripture represented as a God hating Sin ; Sin indeed is infinitely odious in his Sight. Now let us weigh these things, and lay them together, and then we shall see that it can be nothing else that keeps us from Destruction but God's Unchangeableness, to which therefore we should give the Glory : 'Tis the Grace and Love of God that first brings us into a Condition of Life and Salvation, and 'tis the Unchangeableness of God that keeps us there. Truly, when some of us reflect a little upon our selves, and consider what we are, and have been, in our Spirits and Carriages God-ward ; how much we have provoked him, what frequent Forfeitures we have made, and do make, of our Lives, Souls, and all, we see infinite Cause to wonder that we are alive, that the Flames of Divine Wrath had not long since kindled upon us, and the Revenges of Divine Justice broken out against us ; and blessed be God that we are out of Hell. O, that such a proud, such a stubborn, such a stiff-necked, People, as we are, should yet live ! That Persons of so many and high Provocations against God, as thou Reader, and I, are guilty of, should yet have a Being out of Hell ! This is solely from the Unchangeableness of God : And, my Beloved, we do not rightly consider the Matter, if we do not see and acknowledge it to be so. O blessed be God for his Unchangeableness ! had not God been unchangeable, where had I now been ? I had now been shut up

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in the Infernal Pit; I had now been a Companion with Devils and Damned Spirits; I had now been separated from God for ever; and how miserable then had I been? O, my Soul, adore the Unchangeable One, and bless him for his Unchangeable Counsel, his Unchangeable Covenant, his Unchangeable Love.

C H A P. VII.

Several Grounds of Humbling from the Consideration of God's Unchangeableness, as our Unlikeness to him therein, our charging him with Change, our living so little upon his Unchangeableness.

AS the Unchangeableness of God is very Teaching and Instructive, so also very Humbling, if rightly weighed and improved by us: There are several Things which the Consideration thereof do call aloud upon us to be humbled for, and Oh that we would lay them to Heart!

1. Is God unchangeable? Then how should we be humbled for our exceeding great Changeableness, and therein our Unlikeness to God the Chief Good? The more changeable we are in what is good, the more unlike God we are; and the more unlike God we are, the more Cause we have of humbling. Oh, how should we loath our selves, and be abased at the Foot of God in the Sense of our great Fickleness and Changeableness? Alas! how changeable are we in all that is good? How changeable are many of us in our Judgments and Opinions, being like *Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, as you have

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have it, *Eph. 4. 14.* being apt to be soon removed from the Faith of the Gospel, as the Galatians were, at which Paul marvelled, *Gal. 1. 6.* How changeable are we in our Affections to God, and the Things of God? Now the Heart flames with Love to God and Christ, anon 'tis chill and cold. Now we are full of Holy Longings and Desires after God, and Christ, Grace, and Glory; we can say with the Church of old, *The Desire of our Soul is unto thee, O God, and to the Remembrance of thy Name, Isa. 26. 8.* yea, our Soul thirsteth for God; yea, for the Living God; yea, as the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth our Soul after God, as the Psalmist speaks: Anon there is not any one Holy Breathing to be found within us: No, we are even made up of worldly, sinful, unclean, Desires; we pant after the Dust of the Earth, as these, *Amos 2. 7.* we are athirst for the Creature, and nothing but that will satisfy us. Now we delight in God and his Ways; We rejoice in the Lord, and our Soul is joyful in our God, as 'twas with the Church, *Isa. 61. 10.* and his Ways are sweet and pleasant to us, his Law is our Delight; anon we relish no Sweetness, we take and exercise no Joy, no Delight, either in the one or in the other; but we drive on heavily, every Duty being a Burthen to us, and the very Thoughts of God a Trouble. Now we fear and stand in awe of God, not daring to sin against him; we stand in awe of his Presence; we stand in awe of his Holiness; we stand in awe of his Goodness; we stand in awe of his Power, and the like: Anon we are fearless and regardless of him, boldly venturing upon sinning against him. Now we dread Sin as Hell it self, yea, and worse too; anon we embrace it, and delight in it. Again, how changeable are we in our Holy Purposes and Resolutions? We take up this and that Holy Resolution, we purpose to walk so
and

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and so with God, to keep such and such a Watch over our Spirits and Ways; to live more in Communion with God, to drive a greater Trade and Design to Heaven, and to hasten more to that better Country, and the like; but alas! how do such Resolutions fade, and change, and die, within us; nor one of many of them ever proves firm and effectual; yea, many times no sooner are such Resolutions taken up by us, but presently we run counter to them, and break with God more than before; the first Temptation that comes turns us quite beside our Purpose, and we miserably miscarry in the very things we resolved about: Our Holy Purposes are for the most part abortive, *We turn aside like a deceitful Bow*, (as God complains of those, *Psal. 78. 57.*) 'Tis a sad Complaint which I have read in one of the Ancients; *Oftentimes* (says he) *have I promised and resolved to amend, but I never made it good, but always I returned to Sin, and to my former Wickednesses; I added new, and worse, I never reformed as I ought.* And who of us may not in a great Measure make the same Complaint? Yet once more, how changeable are we in our Ways and Walkings? How uneven and unconstant in our Goings? We have *an Heart that loveth to wander*, (as God speaks of them of old, *Jer. 14. 10.*) O the Turnings aside, and O the Turnings back, that we are guilty of in our walking with God! Oh the Gaps, and Pauses, and Interruptions, that are in our Obedience! we should go on in one even constant Tenure of Holy Obedience; but alas! we are in and out, off and on, often in the Day, yea, in the Hour; yea, many times sudden and great Changes are found in our Spirits and Carriages God-ward, and that for the worse. I'll give you one, and but one, Instance of this, and that in an eminently Holy Man, an Instance that may well make all of us tremble, and

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that is of *Jeremiah*, *Jer. 20. 13, 14, 15.* Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord; for he hath delivered the Soul of the Poor from the Hand of Evil-doers, Cursed be the Day wherein I was born; let not the Day wherein my Mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the Man that brought Tidings to my Father, saying, A Man-child is born-unto thee, making him very glad. Pray mark, what a great Change there was wrought in this Good Man's Spirit, and that all of a sudden; in *Vers. 13.* he looks like one dropt out of Heaven, praising God for his Goodness and Salvation, and calling upon others so to do; but in *Vers. 14, 15.* he looks rather like one broken loose out of Hell, cursing himself, and almost every one about him. In the one he looks more like an Angel than an imperfect Saint; in the other he looks more like a Devil than a Man; so great was the Change in his Spirit, and this suddenly made. When he had in *Vers. 13.* been praising God, and was, as it were, taken up to Heaven, the very next News you hear of him, is, that he is full of Cursing. And truly thus changeable are we all here. O how suddenly many times do we change and fall from the best into the worst of Frames and Conditions before God? From Love to Hatred, from Faith to Unbelief, from Holy Fear to Carnal Security, from Obedience to Rebellion, from Delight in God to a Neglect of God, and a Weariedness of his Ways and Presence? O let us be humbled for this our exceeding Changeableness, and therein our Unlikeness to God in his Unchangeableness.

2. Is God unchangeable? Then how should we be humbled that we do so often wrong God, charging him with Unconstancy and Change, as we do. Such, my Beloved, is the Enmity and Unbelief of our Hearts, that we are apt, upon all Occasions, to take up hard Thoughts of God, and bring in black Charges against him: Now we charge him with

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Weakness, and anon with Folly; now with Unfaithfulness, and anon with Unjustice; now with Cruelty, and anon with Change; which is a great Evil, and calls for great Humbling: God is unchangeable, and he stands much upon the Glory of his Unchangeableness, and yet we charge him with Change: What an Affront is this? This the Psalmist, whoever he was, came near unto, *Psal.* 77. 7, 8, 9. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his Promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be Gracious? Hath he in Anger shut up his tender Mercies?* What is all this but in Effect a Charging of God with Change? He is here even upon the Point of concluding, that God is not the God he was, that he is not so Merciful, nor so Faithful, nor so Gracious, as formerly he was: 'Tis as if he should have said, God was a God of Mercy; Mercy pleased him, but now his Mercy is at an end, and he is become all Severity;—he was Faithful in his Promises, but now his Promises fail, and fail utterly; he was a Gracious God, Grace was his darling Attribute, but now his Grace is forgotten by him: Thus for a time he did charge God with change, though afterwards, as the Context tells us, his Faith recover'd it self, and he came to right Thoughts of God again. *Job* also was deeply involved in this Guilt, *Job* 30. 21. *Thou art turned to be cruel to me,* (says he to God) *thou wert a Kind, but now thou art a Cruel, God to me.* The Church also is full of this, *Isa.* 49. 14. *and she speaks it out, Sion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me;* q. d. God is changed, he is not the God he was: Thus I say, though God be unchangeable, yet we are apt to charge him with Change; we are apt to think that he is neither what he was, nor where he was; that he is either not so Good as he was, or else not so

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Great, so Powerful, so Wise, so Holy, so Faithful, so Gracious, as he was, and the like: *Behold,* (says the Prophet) *the Lord's Hand is not shortned, that it cannot save; neither is his Ear heavy, that it cannot hear, Isa. 59. 1.* They thought and concluded that God's Hand was shortned, that is, that his Power was lessened, and that he was not as able to save us now as formerly; they thought and concluded that his Ear was grown heavy, that is, that he was not so good, and kind, and ready, to hear their Prayers now as formerly; he was a God able to save, but now, say they, he is not; he was a Prayer-hearing God, but now, say they, he is not: Thus they were ready to charge him with Change: But, says the Prophet, there is no such Matter, God is what he was, his Power is the same, and his Readiness to hear, and help, and save, is the same that ever it was. There are, among others, Two Cases especially in which we are apt to charge the unchangeable God with Change; one is, when we change in our Carriages and Behaviour towards God; the other is, when God's Carriages and Dispensations are changed towards us; for indeed we are apt to measure God, and judge of him, by his outward Carriage and Dispensations towards us; and when they are changed, we conclude he is changed: In *Gen. 31. 2.* 'tis said, *that Jacob beheld the Countenance of Laban, and behold, it was not toward him as before:* So we many times behold the Countenance of God, his outward Carriage and Dispensation towards us, and 'tis not towards us as before, his Countenance is chang'd; and because his Countenance is not, we think his Heart is not toward us as formerly, but is changed. O, my Beloved, let us take heed of this grand Evil, of charging God with Change; 'tis indeed a grand Evil, 'tis what is very grievous and provoking to God, and 'tis what lays the Soul un-

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der much deep dyed Guilt; 'tis indeed to rob God of one of the Brightest Jewels in his Crown; yea, 'tis to un-God him: For if he be changeable, he is not God; tremble therefore, Reader, and tremble, O my Soul, at the Thoughts of such a thing as this, namely, to charge the Unchangeable One with Change.

Is God unchangeable? Then how should we be humbled that we live so much upon the Creature, and so little upon God; so much upon the Creature that does change, and so little upon God that changes not? If we reflect seriously upon our selves, we shall find, (at least many of us) that we live more upon the Creature, than we do upon God; more upon broken Cisterns, than we do upon this Fountain of Living Waters; at least, the Best and Holiest of us will find that we live too much upon the Creature, and too little upon God; witness the Eagerness, Strength, and Vehemency, of our Desires after the Creature more than after God, and Communion with God: Alas! how passionately many times do we long, and how vigorously do we pursue, after the Creature, when we can be content well enough without God, and Communion with God? Witness the Frequency of our Thoughts and Contemplations of and about the Creature, more than of God, and about God. Alas! *we mind Earthly Things*, as those did, *Phil.* 3. 19. but how seldom do we think of God, and contemplate God? Now that which is most in our Thoughts, that we live most upon, witness our Delight and Complacency in the Creature, more than in God? O, what Fresh, Springing, Vigorous, Delights have we many times in the Creature? But when, and how little, do we delight our selves in God? Now that which we take most Delight and Complacency in, that do we live most upon. Witness our Immoderate Griefs, and the Bitterness of Spirit we are usually in for the Loss

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or Withdrawment of the Creatures, more than for the Loss and Withdrawment of God and his Presence from us. Let this, or the other Creature-Comfort, be withdrawn from us, and how do we take on usually? And what Bitterness of Soul are we filled withal? Then with *Hagar we lift up our Voice and weep, Gen. 21. 19.* How did *Jonah*, that Good Man, take on when the Gourd was withered? *Jon. 4. 7, 8, 9.* But how seldom do we grieve, and bleed, and mourn, for want of Communion with God? Yea, how indifferent for the most part are we whether we have Communion with God or no? And what does this argue, but that we live too much upon the Creature, and too little upon God? Thus if we seriously reflect upon our selves, we shall find by these, and such like things as these, that we live more upon the Creatures than we do upon God; and O how humbling should this be upon us! The Creatures they are vain, fading, changeable, Things; they are even Vanity it self, and Changeableness it self; but God is an Eternal, Unchangeable, Good; He is the same for ever, an Unchangeable Fountain of all Goodness, Sweetness, Blessedness, and Delight: Now to live upon these changeable Creatures, and not upon this unchangeable God, this is a great Evil, and calls for great Mourning and Humbling at our Hands. 'Tis a great Speech which I have read in *Austin*, wherein he bewails this very Sin; *He that made me is Good, (says he) and he is my Good; but in this I sinned, that not in Him, but in his Creatures, I sought my self, and my other Pleasures; that is, I took up my Solace and Happiness in the Creatures, and not in God; and what then? And so, says he, I ran my self upon many Dolors, Errors, and Confusion of Soul: And may not many of us make the very same Complaint? He that made us is Good, and he is our Good; but in*
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this we have sinned, and do sin, that we live upon the Creatures, and not upon Him, and so run our selves upon many Dolors, Errors, and Confusion of Soul : We live upon changeable Creatures more than upon an unchangeable God ; and hereby God is dishonoured, his Spirit is grieved, our Souls are bereaved of Good, yea, the best Good, the Good of Grace, and Divine Discoveries and Communications ; hereby we eat Husks, when we might eat Bread ; and we drink Swill, when we might drink Wine in our Father's House. Hereby we are exposed to Sorrows, Snares, and Death ; yea, and hereby we are in Danger of being excluded from God for ever. Oh, my Beloved, let us be convinced of this Evil, and mourn over it : For my own part, when I reflect upon my self, I find Cause to fear that I have lived upon Creatures all my Days, upon changeable Creatures, to the great, if not total, Neglect of the unchangeable God ; and believe it, 'tis an hard thing to come off from the one, to live so purely and intirely upon the other, as we ought to do : The Lord humble us for these Things.

C H A P. VIII.

God has a Revenue of Honour due to him upon the Account of his Unchangeableness. We should give him that Honour. Several short and plain Directions in order thereunto.

EVERY Attribute or Perfection of God, has a Revenue of Honour and Glory due to it from the Creature ; and 'tis a great Part of both the Wisdom and Duty of the Creature, to give to each

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Attribute and Perfection of his its proper Glory. God is pleased to reveal and discover himself, sometimes in one, and sometimes in another, Attribute of his; sometimes he reveals and discovers himself in his Wisdom, sometimes in his Power, sometimes in his Holiness, sometimes in his Faithfulness, sometimes in his Justice, sometimes in his Grace, sometimes in his Greatness, and sometimes, as here, in his Unchangeableness; now, I say, a great Part of a Christian's Skill and Duty lyes in this, To give to each Attribute, in which God reveals himself, its proper Glory, that is to say, to honour God suitable to the present Revelation he makes of himself. Now God being unchangeable, our Work and Care should be, to give him the Glory of his Unchangeableness, which, let me tell you, is very dear to him. But how may we give God the Glory due to this Attribute of his? Take only these few plain Directions as to that briefly.

1. Would we give God the Glory of his Unchangeableness? Then let us get our Hearts deeply affected with this Attribute of his, being in an Holy Manner over-awed therewith. The Unchangeableness of God is an awful Attribute, an Attribute that challenges much Holy Awe and Dread from the Creature; and when our Hearts are indeed in an Holy Manner over-awed with the Sense of this Attribute, and we are filled with a reverential Regard of God, as he is an unchangeable God, then do we give him the Glory thereof: This seems to be pointed at, *Isa. 41. 4, 5. in Vers. 4.* God reveals himself in his Unchangeableness, when he says, *I the Lord, the First and the Last; I am the First, and the Last*; or, (as some render it) *I the same, I the same*: And in *Vers. 5.* you have the Isles affected and over-awed with this Attribute of his; *The Isles saw it, and feared*: Accordingly, if we would indeed give God the Glory

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of his Unchangeableness, we should labour to get our Hearts over-awed with the Sense and Apprehension thereof; we should dwell much in the Meditation of this Perfection of God; our Language should be, Well, how changeable soever we are, yet God is unchangeable, he is for ever the same, unchangeable in Greatness, unchangeable in Goodness, unchangeable in Wisdom, unchangeable in Power, unchangeable in Holiness, unchangeable in Faithfulness, unchangeable in Fulness and Sufficiency; he is every way an unchangeable God; what he was, he is; what he is, he will be for ever: Thus we should sit down and contemplate this Attribute, till we find our Hearts affected and over-awed by it.

2. Would we give God the Glory of his Unchangeableness? Then let us ascribe this Attribute to God, and celebrate his Glory in it. In *Deut.* 32. 3. we are called upon to ascribe Greatness to God; and as we should ascribe Greatness, so we must ascribe Unchangeableness, to God, and withal admire and adore him therein, if we mean to give him the Glory of this Attribute of his: This the *Psalmist* does once and again, *From everlasting* (says he) *to everlasting thou art God*, *Psal.* 90. 1, 2. and again, *They shall perish*, (says he, speaking of the Heavens) *but thou Lord shalt endure; they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no end*, *Psal.* 102. 25, 26, 27. He celebrates the Glory of God in his Unchangeableness, admiring and adoring him in this Perfection of his: The Church does the same thing in *Rev.* 4. 8. where we read of *Four Beasts which rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come: Pray mark, First, They celebrate the Glory of God's Holiness, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy: Secondly, They celebrate*

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the Glory of God's Power and Sovereignty, *Lord God Almighty* : Thirdly, They celebrate the Glory of God's Unchangeableness and Eternity, *which was, which is, and which is to come*; *q. d.* Thou art an Holy God, and we adore thee for thine Holiness; thou art a Potent and Sovereign Lord, and we adore thee for thy Power and Sovereignty; thou art an Unchangeable God, and we adore thee for thine Unchangeableness; how fading soever the Creatures are, thou art still the same: In like manner should we do, we should ascribe Unchangeableness to God, and be much in admiring and adoring him for, and in, this Perfection of his; this is all that we can do; and 'tis indeed our glorifying of him, to display and make mention of the Excellencies and Perfections of God, and with both our Spirits and Tongues to celebrate the Glory of them, which indeed will be our Work for ever; O let us be much in it now.

3. Would we give God the Glory of his Unchangeableness? Then let us see and acknowledge him and his Unchangeableness to be the sole Spring and Fountain of all that Unchangeableness that either Men or Angels do attain unto; the Creatures, Men and Angels not excepted, in themselves are all changeable; but yet there is a Blessed Unchangeableness, which some of them, I mean the Saints and Holy Angels, do at last attain unto; they are (as the School-men speak of them) *in omni bono confirmati*, eternally and unchangeably confirmed in all Good, in all Holiness, all Happiness; and whence comes this to pass? Verily, from the Unchangeableness of God, that is the Spring and Fountain of all: Were not God unchangeable, unchangeable in his Covenant, Counsel, and Love, they would never arrive to such an Unchangeableness; to God's Unchangeableness therefore we should give the Glory of it. Look,

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as Christ said in another Case, *Because I live, ye shall live also, Joh. 14. 19.* So may God say, both to Men and Angels, because I am unchangeable, therefore shall ye be unchangeable also : Indeed, the Unchangeableness which Saints and Angels do attain unto, is but a Beam, as it were, of God's Unchangeableness, emitted down upon them; they shall be unchangeably holy, because God is so; they are unchangeably blessed, because God is so; and they have Communion with him by Christ in his unchangeable Holiness and Blessedness; see therefore, and acknowledge God and his Unchangeableness in that Unchangeableness which Saints and Angels attain unto, ascribing theirs wholly to his.

4. Would we give God the Glory of his Unchangeableness? Then let us live upon this Unchangeableness of his: The more we live upon the Unchangeableness of God, the more we honour it, and give him the Glory of it: Now we should live upon it under a double Notion.——

1. We should live upon it as the sole Cause of all our Preservation, expecting all from it, and ascribing all to it; this God challenges from us in the very Text; *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye are not consumed; q. d.* 'Tis from my Unchangeableness that you are alive, that you are out of Hell, and 'tis my Unchangeableness that must keep you alive, and preserve you for ever, and I expect you should own it, and live upon it, accordingly: Our Language should be, I am alive; and why? Because God is unchangeable; I am out of Hell, and why? Because God is unchangeable; yea, I hope I shall live, and that for ever; but why? Because God is unchangeable: True, I am a changeable Creature, and being left to my self, I shall quickly forfeit Life, Soul, Salvation, and all; yea, I am forfeiting all every Day and Hour by Sin; but God

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is an unchangeable God, he is for ever the same, his Counsel, his Covenant, his Love, are all unchangeable, and therefore I do live, and shall live, yea, live eternally: Oh, this is so to live upon the Unchangeableness of God, as to give him the Glory of that Perfection of his.— 2. We should live upon the Unchangeableness of God as a Sweet Spring of Comfort and Refreshment to us under all those afflictive Changes, which here in this World we meet withal: We here meet with many afflictive Changes; *Changes and War are upon us*; but the Unchangeableness of God is a Sweet Spring of Comfort and Refreshment in all, and under all; and when we live upon it as such, bearing up our Souls thereupon, then do we give this Attribute its proper Glory. This is what is called for, *Isa.* 26. 4. *Trust ye in the Lord for ever*, (that is, live, rest, depend, upon him: Why so?) *for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength*; the Words are, the Rock of Ages, the Rock of this Age, the Rock of former Ages, the Rock of Ages to come, a Rock in all Ages, and the Rock of all Ages; that is to say, a firm, unchangeable, One; and being such an One, he is, he must be, the proper Object of Trust; and unless we do trust in him, and live upon him, as our Life, we do not give him his proper Glory: We should, as it were, sit down, and say, Well, though my Estate changes, yet God does not change, and so long all is well: Tho' my Friends and Comforts change, my Friends turn Enemies, and my Comforts Crosses, yet God does not change, and so long all is well: Yea, 'tis true, my Spirit changes, there is no Fixedness, no Stability, in it, as to any thing that is good and gracious; yet however God changes not, he is always the same, and I'll live on him; *The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock*, (says David) *Psal.* 18. 46. *Friends die, Trade dies, and my self am*

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The Unchangeableness of God. 87

a dying, but *the Lord lives*, and there is enough in that to bear me up under all: O when thus we live upon God's Unchangeableness, as a Spring and Fountain of Comfort to us under all afflictive Changes here, then do we give him the Glory of this Attribute of his.

5. Would we give God the Glory of his Unchangeableness? Then let us labour to imitate him, and to be as like him herein as possibly we can; let us labour, as much as possible, for an Holy Unchangeableness, a Fixedness and Stability in what is good, even here, and that in Conformity to God: We cast an Honour (as one observes) upon them whom we imitate; for by our Imitation of them we acknowledge an Excellency in them, which is all that honouring in the first Notion of it imports; sure I am, the more like to God we covet to be, and the more we imitate him in this Perfection of his, by coming up to an Holy Evenness and Stability in what is Good, the more do we honour him, and give him his proper Glory: But this may possibly be spoken to in a Chapter by it self in its proper Place. Thus you see how to give God that Glory which is due to him upon the Account of his Unchangeableness.

C H A P. IX.

God's Unchangeableness should induce us to chuse him for our God and Portion, and to take up the Rest and Happiness of our Souls in him, with Arguments to quicken thereunto.

THE Unchangeableness of God calls aloud upon us all to chuse him for our God and Portion, and to take up the Rest and Happiness of our Sou's in him, and not in the Creatures. The Truth is, to chuse God for our God and Portion, and

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and to take up our Rest and Happiness in him, is what every Discovery of God, in one or another Excellency or Perfection of his, does challenge and call for at our Hands: Does he reveal himself to be an Holy God? This calls upon us to chuse him for our God and Portion, and to get an Interest in his Holiness: Does God reveal himself to be a Gracious God, a God of Grace and Love? This calls upon us to chuse him for our God and Portion, and to get an Interest in his Love: Doth he reveal himself to be a Faithful God, a God that keepeth Covenant and Mercy? This calls upon us to chuse him for our God and Portion, and to get an Interest in his Faithfulness: So here: Does God reveal himself to be an Unchangeable God? This calls upon us to chuse him for our God and Portion, and to get an Interest in his Unchangeableness, taking up the Rest and Happiness of our Souls in him; and accordingly, O that we would look and live above changeable Creatures, taking up our Rest and Happiness in this unchangeable God, which to do is even infinitely our safest and sweetest Course: For pray consider, who or what you will chuse for your Portion, and wherein will you place the Rest and Happiness of your Souls, if not in the unchangeable God? Sure I am, you have but God or the Creature to make Choice of: Now what is the Creature to God? What is the changeable Creature to the unchangeable God? Alas! the one is infinitely short of the other: God indeed is every way, and in all respects, a most desirable Good; he is an original Good, a full Good, a suitable Good, a satisfying Good, an unmixed Good, an all-sufficient Good, and, which crowns all, an unchangeable Good, a Good that never fades, never fails. *He is the Living God, and steadfast for ever, Dan. 6. 26.* The Creatures are all changeable and perishing: An Heathen could
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say, *We live among perishing things* : And 'twas a great Saying of one of the Ancients, *We have nothing here (says he) of any long Continuance; and all the Felicity of this World is gone while we hold it, and lost even while we enjoy it*; such, and so great, is the Changeableness and Uncertainty of all these Things: But God (as you have heard) and all that Good that is in him, is always and for ever the same, which speaks him to be Infinitely sweet and desirable, and so Infinitely worthy to be embraced by us for our God and Portion: This indeed crowns and perfects all that Good that is in God. Look, as the Changeableness of the Creatures lowers and allays that Good and Sweetness that is in them; so the Unchangeableness of God does infinitely raise and commend that Good and Excellency that is in him. Had the Creatures Ten Thousand times more Good and Excellency in them than they have, yet this one Consideration, that they are changeable, were enough to damp all, and quash all; though the Creatures had never so much Sweetness and Goodness in them, and though I had never so full, free, and ample, Injoyment of them; though the Streams ran never so pleasantly on each Hand of me, yet this one Thought, that all this is fading and changeable, and will last but for a Season, were enough to allay my Joy, and even imbitter all to me: So on the other Hand, though God be such an Infinite Ocean of Goodness, Sweetness, and Blessedness, as he is; yet that which crowns all, is his Unchangeableness in all; and without this 'tis not the Whole of God could make us Happy. Now shall the Consideration hereof induce you to chuse him for your God and Portion, and take up your Rest and Happiness in him for ever? Possibly you have never yet chosen God to be your God and Portion, nor have you taken up the Rest and Happiness of your Souls

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Souls in him; you have chosen the Creatures, you have chosen this World, you have chosen carnal, sensual, things, and in these have you placed your Rest and Happiness; but as for God, he has hitherto been *far from your Reins*; you have centred in changeable Creatures, and forgotten the unchangeable God: But will you now change your Choice, and take up a new Rest? Oh now let an unchangeable God, not changeable Creatures, be your God and Portion, your Rest and Happiness. O that the Language of your Souls to God might now be that of the Psalmist, Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.* Lord, thou, and thou alone, shall be my God, my Rest, my Portion, my Happiness, and my All, for ever: Indeed I had chosen the Creatures for my Portion and Happiness, but now I renounce that Choice, I'll have no more to do with changeable Creatures; the World was my Happiness, and I sat down with it, *so foolish was I, and ignorant*; but now I have done with the World, this flitting, fading, dying, World, and thou Lord alone shall be my All for ever: Oh that you would indeed thus chuse the unchangeable God, and take up your Rest and Happiness in him this Day: And you that have chosen him, and taken up your Happiness in him, make a new Choice of him, and take up your Rest more purely and entirely in him; say over this unchangeable One, *This God is our God for ever and ever*, Psal. 48. 14. Oh, labour to get more above the Creatures, and live more in God, and upon God: The more purely and entirely you take up your Rest in God, the sweeter will he be to you, and the more Satisfaction will your Souls find in him. Now to quicken you thus to chuse God, and live upon him and his Unchangeableness.

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1. Consider what a changeable World we live in; we live in a changeable World, in a World that rings Changes every Day, many Changes and great Changes; the Truth is, This World is a very changeable World, and 'tis not long e'er it will be changed once for all; the Day is coming when *all these things shall be dissolved; the Heavens shall pass away with a Noise, the Earth shall melt with fervent Heat,* 2 Pet. 3. 10, 11. and in the mean time the World is not without its Changes; and how great Changes we may live to see who knows? Such Changes seem to be coming upon the World, as that nothing but an unchangeable God will be able to bear us up under them. In *Luke 21. 25, 26.* we read of *Distress of Nations which shall be upon the Earth with Perplexity; Mens Hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that shall come to pass upon the Earth:* The Sum of which amounts to this, that there shall be such Changes, such Rendings, such Shakings, such Terrible Convulsions and Concussions, wrought in the Nations of the World; such Desolations shall be made, and such Terrible Storms of Wrath and Vengeance shall fall upon the World, as that Men shall be even exanimated, and driven to their Wits End, they shall fall under a *Deliquium Animi*, a Swooning of Spirit, they shall breathe out their very Souls; or, they shall be filled with such Anguish, Horror, and Confusion, of Soul, as that they shall be ready to lay violent Hands upon themselves, and take away their own Lives: And, my Beloved, should we live to see such things, how good will an unchangeable God be? O, Sirs! living in such a changeable World, who would not fix upon an unchangeable God, as a Man's Portion and Happiness? Who would not get upon, yea, into, this *Rock of Ages*? And how good, how sweet, will it be

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be to have an unchangeable God to retreat to, and
ark in ?

2. Consider what changeable things all our Creature-Comforts and Contentments are : As the World wherein we live is a changeable World, so all our Creature-Comforts are changeable Comforts; should the World stand where it does, and as it does, without any such Changes as we have mentioned ; yet our best Creature-Comforts here are subject to change every Day ; and how soon we may say of one or another, or all of them, as *Jacob* sometimes did of his Two Sons, *Joseph* and *Simeon*, *Gen. 42. 36. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not.* How soon we may say, this and that Comfort is not, who can tell ? I have now a Trade, to morrow, it may be, I shall have none : I have now an Estate, to morrow, it may be, I shall have none : I have now a pleasant Habitation, to morrow, it may be, it will be in Ashes : I have now my Friends and Relations about me, my Husband, or my Wife, lying pleasantly in my Bosom; my Children like Olive-branches round about my Table, to morrow, it may be, they will all sleep in the Dust, and go down to the Gates of the Grave, and I shall see them no more : Alas ! these things *are not*, (as *Solomon* speaks of Riches) such is their Changeableness, that they have scarce a Being; or, suppose these things should stay with us, yet how soon may they be imbitter'd to us ? How soon may the best of this Wine be turned into Wormwood ? How soon may the sweetest of these Comforts be changed into bitter Crosses ? Sometimes *the Desire of our Eyes is taken away from us with a Stroke*, (as God threatned the Prophet of old) that is, suddenly, and e'er ever we are aware of it, our dearest, sweetest, and most delightful, Comforts are taken from us : At other times the Desire of our Eyes becomes the Burthen of our
Souls,

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Souls, our dearest Comforts are imbittered to us; that which Yesterday was sweet and pleasant, to Day possibly is bitter and burthensome to us; that which to Day is the Joy of our Hearts, to Morrow, it may be, will be as a Goad in our Sides, and as Thorns in our Eyes: O how soon many times do our most pleasant Streams turn into Waters of *Marah* to us! Now all on this Side God being thus changeable, who would not rest in him and his Unchangeableness? Oh Unchangeableness! Unchangeableness! This is to be found in God alone, and therefore let him alone be the Rest and Portion of our Souls.

3. Consider how near our last and great Change is unto us: Should the World never wax old, nor admit of any Change; and should our Creature-Comforts and Contentments live and last for ever; yet we our selves must change, we are fading, dying, perishing, Creatures; we pass under many Changes, and great Changes, and 'tis but a little while e'er our last and great Change will come: Death is our last and great Change till the Resurrection: So the Holy Ghost by *Job* speaks of it, *Job* 14. 14. and this is a great Change indeed, a Change from Work to Reward, from Time to Eternity; a Change out of this World into another; from these Tabernacles of Clay, to live in eternal Regions, either of Light or Darkness; and thus shall we all be changed: A few Years, a few Months, a few Weeks, a few Days, a few Hours, yea, it may be, but a few Moments, more, and we shall all be thus changed, changed by Death out of Time into Eternity; and how much then are we concerned to make Choice of, and take up our Rest in, an unchangeable God? Then, namely, when we pass under this Change, to be sure nothing but Unchangeableness will be of any Avail to us, and this is to be found in God alone; him therefore

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therefore should we chuse and take up our Rest in. This very Consideration induced *David* to make a fresh Choice of God, and cleave more entirely to him, as his Rest and Happiness, *Pf. 39. 5, 6, 7. Behold, O Lord, thou hast made my Days as an Hand-breadth, and mine Age is as nothing before thee; Verily, every Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity; surely every Man walketh in a vain Shew, surely they are disquieted in vain: Well, and what now? Why, says he, And now, Lord, what wait I for? My Hope is in thee.* He saw his Vanity and Changeableness, as also the Vanity and Changeableness of all others, both Persons and Things; he saw both himself and all others in their very best State to be not only vain, but even Vanity it self, subject to Change every Hour; in the Sight and Sense of which he cleaves to God, chuses him, centers in him, as his God, his Portion, his All: *Now, Lord, what wait I for? My Hope is in thee; q. d. Now, Lord, that I have seen my own Vanity and Changeableness, and the Vanity and Changeableness of others too, now I look to thee, I cleave to thee, I rest in thee, as my only Good, Portion, and Happiness: I have now done with the Streams, with the Creatures, and Creature-Contentments, and I'll now bathe only in the Fountain, rest wholly in thy self, the Fountain of Living Waters.* And, my Beloved, did we dwell more in the Consideration of the Nearness of our last and great Change, we should doubtless cleave more closely and entirely to the unchangeable God, as our Rest and Portion: Our thus numbering our Days, deep and frequent Consideration of the Shortness of our Lives, and how soon we may be changed, would make us to apply our Hearts to this Wisdom, to get an Interest in the Unchangeable God, *Psal. 90. 12. O be much therefore in this Work.*

4. Consider,

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4. Consider that then, and not till then, shall we be Happy indeed, when we come to look and live above changeable Creatures upon an unchangeable God. 'Tis Happiness, my Beloved, that is the great Interest of Souls, and 'tis Happiness we all desire and pursue after; now then are we Happy indeed, and not till then, when we get above the Creatures, and take up our Rest in the unchangeable God. Pray, Sirs, let us consider things a little; suppose you had this whole World at Will, and might enjoy as much of the Creature as your Souls could wish; suppose you could all your Days live in a Paradise of all earthly Delights, and swim chin-deep in the Streams of all Creature-Contentments, yet what were all this? Alas! it would not make up one Dram of true Happiness; your Happiness must be in God still: Mind how the Psalmist speaks as to this, *Psal. 144. 15. Happy is the People that is in such a Case; yea, Happy is that People whose God is the Lord.* In what Case was this? Why, a Case of outward Prosperity, a Case of enjoying an Affluence of all outward Creature-Contentments; for of these he had spoken before. But, *David*, is this really your Judgment? And do you give it us for a Divine Truth, that these things make Men Happy? No, (says he) I rather herein tell you what the World's Judgment is, and wherein they look upon Happiness to consist; they think those of all others to be the Happiest People, who enjoy most of this World, most Ease, most Pleasure, most of Creature-Comforts: But (says he) I am of another Mind, I account them the Happy People who have the Lord for their God, that is, who have a Covenant-Relation to, and Interest in, the Blessed God; 'tis God, not the Creature, the Enjoyment of whom makes Happy. The former Proposition [*Happy is the People that is in such a Case*] shews what carnal Men judge concerning

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concerning Happiness, and what makes Happy in their Account ; the latter Proposition, [*yea, Happy is the People whose God is the Lord*] shews what true Happiness indeed is, and wherein it consists, which is in an Interest in God, in the unchangeable One : Or, *this latter is* (as one observes) *a Correction of the former ; and 'tis as if he should say, but I would rather say, they are the Happy Souls who have the true God, not the changeable Creature propitious to them.* Oh, 'tis not the Creature, but God, an Interest in, and Communion with, Unchangeableness that makes Happy : 'Tis the joint Language of all the Creatures, Happiness is not in us, we are all Vanity, and subject to change, and cannot make eternal Souls Happy ; Happiness lyes in God alone, where alone both Fulness and Unchangeableness, Sufficiency and Immutability, are to be found : To look for Happiness in the Creature, is to seek the Living among the Dead ; but to look for it in God, that is, to seek it at the Fountain-head of all true Happiness. What shall I say ? God is his own Happiness, he is eternally Blessed in and with himself, (as has been before declared) and he is the Happiness of his Creatures, both Saints and Angels ; and when God makes his People, his Saints and Servants, perfectly Happy, which he never does till he takes them to Heaven, he then takes them from all their Creature-Contentments, and he admits and receives them into the full and single Enjoyment of himself. 'Twere easie to shew that nothing short of God and his Unchangeableness can possibly make Happy ; and accordingly that we shall never be Happy indeed, till we learn to carry our Happiness above the Road of Creatures, and place it wholly and intirely in God : But I must not run out too far here. Oh, my Beloved, that Man is certainly Happiest whose Heart and Life are Holiest, and whose Commu-

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nion with God is fullest; he that enjoys most of God, whether he enjoys much or little of the Creature, he it is that is most Happy. 'Tis a great Saying which I have read in *Austin*, speaking to those that seek Happiness in the Creature, *Seek what you seek*, (says he) that is, seek Happiness, but know that 'tis not to be found where you seek it; you seek a Blessed Life in the Region of Death, but 'tis not to be found there; for how should there be a Blessed Life found, where there is not so much as Life found? And elsewhere, speaking to God, *All things are full of Trouble and Difficulty, and thou alone art Rest and Happiness*, (says he.) Truly the Creature (as Solomon tells us) is nothing else but *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*; but in God there is Rest, there is Happiness, there is Satisfaction of Soul, to be found; and if you would be Happy indeed, chuse him, and place your Rest and Happiness in him alone.

5. Consider that God freely offers himself, as an unchangeable Good, in his Covenant to you. You know how he speaks to Sinners, even to Sinners, *Isa. 55. 3. Come unto me, and I will make an Everlasting Covenant with you*. And pray what is this Covenant? Why, *I will be your God*, that, you know, is the grand Promise of it, *Jer. 31. 33*. In the Covenant God offers himself to Sinners in all his Glorious Excellencies and Perfections: His Language therein to them is, Come Souls, see what a God I am, how Great, how Good, how Rich, how Glorious; see what Treasures of Light and Life, of Love and Glory, there are in me; and lo! I am willing to be yours, your God, your Friend, your Father, your Portion, your Happiness, your All, for ever: Look, whatever I am, that I will be to you; and whatever I can do, that I will do for you. Thus he offers himself in all his Glorious Excellencies and Perfections to you, and as in all,

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So particularly in his Unchangeableness, **Come,** says he, *I am the Lord, I change not,* and as such an one do I tender my self to you; my Unchangeableness shall be the Rock of your Rest; the Immutability of my Nature, my Counsel, my Covenant, my Love, is a sure footing for your Faith, and a firm Foundation for your Comfort: While I am I will be Life and Blessedness to you; I'll be a never-failing Fountain of Peace, Joy, and Satisfaction, to you; *I am the First and the Last, He who was, and is, and is to come;* and as such I will be yours for ever; and when the World, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up, I will be a standing Portion for you; when the whole World is like a tumbling Ocean round about you, I'll be a *Rock of Ages* to you; and be not afraid of me, I am a God of Grace and Love: 'Tis true, I am the *Great and High God*, but my Highness shall stoop, and my Greatness shall condescend, to you; yea, and nothing shall stand between you and me; no Sin, no Vileness, no Unworthiness, of yours; I know you are poor, vile, sinful, worthless, Worms, infinitely unworthy of me; I know your Sins are many, and the Distance between me and you is great; but all this shall not hinder you from an Interest in Me and my Unchangeableness, if you will take hold of my Covenant, chuse me for your God and Portion, and take up the Rest and Happiness of your Souls in me. Thus God reveals and offers himself in his Covenant to us; and does he thus offer himself in his Covenant to us; and shall we not chuse him for our God and Portion? Shall we stick in the Creature still, and reject the Offer God makes of himself to us? God forbid! Oh let us now chuse this unchangeable God, and let him be our Rest, our Portion, our Happiness, and our All, for ever. Let us reason Matters a little in our own Souls; the World that is full of Changes

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all my Creature-Comforts and Contentments they are subject to change, I am not sure of them one Moment; my own great and last Change is near at Hand, I know not how soon 'twill come upon me, nothing but the unchangeable God can make me Happy; and he freely offers himself in his Covenant to me, and shall I yet, notwithstanding all this, neglect him? Shall I cleave to the Creature, and not to this unchangeable God? By no means; He, not the fading, dying, Creature, shall be my Portion and my Happiness for ever. Or, if all this does not do, then once more,

6. Consider, how sad and dreadful a thing it will be to have the Unchangeableness of God against you. This is a sure Rule, that unless we make God ours by chusing of him, and closing in his Covenant with him, as our God and Portion, he and all his Attributes will at last be found against us, against us to destroy us, and make us miserable for ever: If we make not God's Unchangeableness ours, and ingage it not for us, by chusing him as Unchangeable, his Unchangeableness will stand for ever engaged against us; and Oh how sad will that be? 'Tis sad to have any Attribute of God against a Man; but to have his Unchangeableness against us, how sad is that? O for a Man to have God for his eternal Enemy, God eternally and unchangeably set against him, this is enough to render him compleatly and unchangeably miserable. Again, therefore let me call upon you to look and live above changeable Creatures, and to chuse, rest in, and live upon, the unchangeable God, as your God and Portion; look upon him in Christ, in whom you will find him infinitely full of Love and Sweetness, in whom you will find him Love it self. *God is Love*, 1 Joh. 4. 8. and accordingly let your Souls chuse him, and cleave to him, as yours for ever.

C H A P. X.

We are to imitate God, and labour for a Likeness to him in his Unchangeableness, by being more constant in that which is good; this, in some Measure, is attainable in this World, 'tis the Perfection of the Soul, where attained, and brings him near the Life of Heaven.

UNchangeableness being one of the Glorious Excellencies and Perfections of God, why should we not imitate him? Why should we not labour to be like unto him herein? Why should we not cover and press after an Holy Unchangeableness in our Spirits and Walkings with him? Sure I am, 'tis what his Unchangeableness calls upon us for. *From the Consideration of God's Immutability, (says a Learned Man) it follows that we also should labour to be immutable in the Things of God, in Faith, in Hope, in Love, and the like.* Look as the Consideration of God's Holiness calls for Holiness in us, and the Consideration of his Goodness and Mercy calls for Goodness and Mercy in us, and the Consideration of his Patience calls for Patience in us, and the like; so the Consideration of his Unchangeableness calls for an Holy Unchangeableness, at least somewhat like it, an Holy Evenness, Steadiness, and Fixedness, of Spirit in our Ways and Walkings with him, and before him; it calls upon us to be more constant and uniform in all Holy Obedience, and in the Exercise of all Grace. True, my Beloved, there are some things so peculiarly appropriate to God, that in respect of them there can be no formal Likeness in the Creature to Him; and it would be Impious Boldness for any to aspire thereunto; such are his Supream Dominion and Sovereign Authority, his Absolute Independency

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dependency and Self-sufficiency, &c. Now in these, while Men affect to imitate him, they (as one observes) wickedly affront him: But now some other Perfections there are found in the Blessed God not so incommunicable and appropriate to him, but that his Creatures may be said to have some Participation thereof with him, and so far to be truly like him; such are his Holiness, his Justice, his Mercy, his Patience, and the like, wherein 'tis our Duty, as well as our Glory, to imitate him, and to labour for as great a Resemblance, and as full a Conformity, to him as possibly we can. In *Mat. 5. 48.* Christ commands us to be perfect, as *our Father which is in Heaven is perfect*; and *Eph. 5. 1.* we are enjoined to be Followers of God, as Dear Children: Be ye Followers of God; the Word is, Be ye Imitators of God, be ye like to him, bearing his Image upon you; and if you are his Children indeed, you will do so: We should imitate God in all his imitable Excellencies and Perfections; yea, this observe moreover, that where there cannot be a proper and formal Likeness or Similitude in us to God, in Respect of those peculiarly appropriate Excellencies that are in him, yet even there should we labour for Impressions, Affections, Dispositions, and Demeanors, of Soul towards him, suitable and answerable to those Excellencies and Perfections of his: As for Instance, he being absolutely Supream, there ought to be in us an humble Subjection and Self-resignation of Soul, disposing us to constant Obedience to him: So he being simply and absolutely independent and self-sufficient, there ought to be in us a Self-emptiness and Nothingness, living wholly and entirely out of ourselves upon him as such a God, fetching all in from his Fountain-fulness: Thus where we are not capable of any formal Likeness to God, we should yet study his Perfections, and labour for Dispositions

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tions of Spirit, and Demeanors of Soul suitable thereunto ; but where we are capable of any Likeness to him, there we should covet it, and press after it: God therefore being unchangeable, we should labour for an Holy Unchangeableness in our Spirits and Walkings before him; we should imitate him, and conform to him herein, so far as we are capable of so doing; we should labour for more Fixedness, more Evenness, more Constancy and Uniformity, in all Grace and Holiness, in all Heavenliness and Obedience, in all Acts of Duty and Walking with God: 'Tis what in a good Measure may be attained unto even here in this World. 'Tis possible, my Beloved, for these roving, inconsistent, unstable, Souls of ours, to be in some good Measure brought up to an Holy Evenness and Unchangeableness in the Ways and Things of God; for this is what some of the Saints have attained unto. In *Gen. 5. 22.* 'tis said of *Enoch*, that *he walked with God Three Hundred Years, and begat Sons and Daughters*: Of others 'tis said that they begat such and such, and they lived so many Years afterwards: But of *Enoch* 'tis said he begat *Methuselah*, and *walked with God Three Hundred Years*; as if his whole Life for that Three Hundred Years were one continued and uninterrupted Course of walking with God. The Phrase (as a Learned Critick observes) seems to carry this in it; *that he had God so present always with him, and he so accommodated himself to the Pleasure of God, as that he seemed perpetually to walk with him.* His Life was, as it were, one constant Course and Series of walking with him: This also is what God calls for, *Be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*, *1 Cor. 15. 58.* This is what the Apostles are ever and anon praying for, both for themselves and others: *The God of all Grace stablish, strengthen, settle, you*, *1 Pet. 5. 10.* This is what

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being attained is the Crown and Perfection of a Christian; so in that same, *1 Pet. 5. 10.* *The God of all Grace, after you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, you.* To be stablished and settled in our Spirits and Ways, in Holy Things, this is our Perfection: 'Tis indeed the Glory of Christianity, and the Honour of a Christian: Oh, my Beloved, the more even and uniform we are in the Things and Ways of God, the more Excellent and Perfect we are, and the more Amiable in the Sight of God: Oh, 'tis not the flashy, high-flown, Talking, but the even and steady Christian, that is most Excellent, most Amiable, in God's Eye; this is a Crown of Glory indeed upon the Head of a poor Soul. 'Twas Queen Elizabeth's Motto, *Semper eadem*, always the same; and truly were it more in an Holy Respect the Christian's Motto, he would be more Glorious than he is: Rawlins you left me, and Rawlins you find me, said that Martyr; meaning, that he was still in the same Mind, the same Spirit, being constant to his Testimony; which was his Crown and Glory. 'Tis an *High and Great Thing* (says one to his Friend) which thou desirest, and even bordering upon a Deity, not to be moved and changed. Sure I am, 'tis an High and Great Thing in Spirituals to come up to an Holy Evenness and Fixedness of Soul; this is that which Honours the Gospel; this is that which renders Religion amiable; this is that which makes way for full and constant Communion with God, for abiding Consolations; this is that which delights the Heart of God; this is that which brings us near to the State and Life of Heaven; for there the Saints and Angels are fixed and unchangeably confirmed in all Good, in all Holiness, in all Happiness: Oh, labour for as much of this Holy Unchangeableness as possibly may be attained unto here on Earth, and then sigh and long for that Life and

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State, where you shall know no Change for ever, but be perfectly, unchangeably, and eternally, Holy and Happy, as God himself is; for you shall be like him, and see him as he is, 1 Joh. 3. 2. 'Tis true, 'tis no easie thing to fix our roving Spirits, and reduce them to a Steadiness in what is good; but remember, the God you are to have Recourse to, to do this great Work for you, is the God of all Grace, as you have it in the prequored Place, 1 Pet. 5. 10. and he therefore can do it with Ease for you: Oh, look to him for this great Blessing, this high Attainment.

C H A P. XI.

The Unchangeableness of God a Sweet Spring of Comfort to his People : Several Consolatory Conclusions thence.

AS God's Unchangeableness calls for much Duty from, so it ministers much sweet Comfort to his poor Church and People: The Truth is, there is scarce any such Spring and Treasury of Comfort as this is; *God's Immutability* (says one) *is the best Cordial to refresh a fainting Soul.* The great Cordial God sent Israel in their Distress was this; *I am that I am*, I am an unchangeable God, *Exod. 3. 14.* and indeed that was enough for them: But more particularly, there are several Consolatory Conclusions which flow from God's Unchangeableness, Conclusions which do carry strong Consolation in them.

1. God being unchangeable, his Glory shall live, and in due time shine forth conspicuously before all; for this see *Isa. 42. 8.* *I am the Lord, I am Jehovab, I am he who was, and is, and is to come*

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come, the Unchangeable God; Well, and what then? Why, *My Glory will I not give to another, nor my Praise to Graven Images*; my Glory shall not die, but live; my Glory shall not be always veiled and eclipsed, but it shall shine forth in perfect Lustre and Splendor. One of the great Burthens that lyes upon the People of God, is the Sufferings of his Name and Glory; *The Reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me*, (says David) Psal. 69. 9. God's Glory is veiled, his Name is blasphemed, his Worship is interrupted, his Providence is denied, all his Attributes are obscured, and his Honour every way thrown in the Dust, which makes Holy Souls go mourning from Day to Day: But, my Beloved, here is that may comfort the Soul, God is unchangeable, and therefore his Glory shall live, and shine forth again; the Veil shall in due time be taken away, and his Glory shall appear; yea, it shall be as eminently Illustrated and Displayed, as ever it has been Veiled and Eclipsed. You know how God speaks in Reference to the Glory of his Name, in Answer to Christ's Prayer, *Joh. 12. 28. Father, Glorifie thy Name*, (says Christ) and what Answer does the Father give him? *I have glorified it, and I will glorifie it again*; q. d. I have hitherto taken Care of my Glory, and I will take Care of it still. O, my Beloved, God's Glory has hitherto been dear to him, and he has hitherto maintained it in the World, and he is unchangeable, and therefore his Glory is as dear to him as ever it was; he is as jealous for it as ever; he is also every way as able to vindicate and maintain it as ever he was; and assure yourselves, were it not that he knows how to make it shine forth so much the more illustriously and conspicuously afterwards, he would not suffer it to be so veiled and eclipsed as sometimes he does; yea, let me say, he is always carrying on, as the In-

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terest of his Peoples Happiness, so the Concerns
of his own Glory.

2. God being unchangeable, his Church shall be preserved and delivered, preserved under, and in due time delivered out of, all her Troubles and Afflictions; and what a Sweet Thing is that? The poor Church of God is oftentimes plunged into very deep and sore Distresses, such as are ready to sink and overwhelm Her; she is oftentimes *afflicted, tossed with Tempests, and not comforted*, Isa. 45. 11. Such indeed is Her Condition at this Day; and as *Good Old Ely* *sate trembling for the Ark of God*, a Type of the Church, 1 Sam. 4. 13. so it may be some may now sit trembling for the Church of God, fearing how 'twill go with Her, and indeed he is not one of *Sion's Children* that is not concerned for *Sion's Afflictions*. But lo! my Beloved, in the midst of all such Fears and Tremblings of Heart here is strong Consolation, God is unchangeable, and being unchangeable, he will certainly support and deliver his Church, and that in the best Way and fittest Season: God has never yet fail'd his Church in Her Afflictions: Yea, 'tis admirable to consider how hitherto he has carried it towards Her under all Her Distresses, how sweetly he has supported Her, and how seasonably he has delivered Her. When they were in *Agypt*, in the Iron Furnace, when they were in the Wilderness, when they were in the Red Sea, when they were in *Babylon*, in *Haman's* time, and in *Herod's*, when the Neck of the whole Church of God was upon the Block at once, as it were, and also all down along, through the Times of Antichristian Tyranny and Persecution to this very Day, O how Admirably has God wrought for them, both in supporting and delivering of them? And certainly what he has done, that he can and will do for them again, as the Case shall require: God is *unchangeable*, *His Hand is not shortened, that he*

cannot

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cannot save; nor his Ear grown heavy, that he cannot hear, *Isa.* 59. 1. God being unchangeable, he is as tender of, and careful for, his Church and People as ever he was; being unchangeable, every way the same to his People now as he was formerly; the same in his Love to them, his Jealousie for them, his Sympathy with them, and his Interest in them; he stands in the same Covenant-Relation to them that ever he did; he is their King, their Head, their Husband, their Friend, their Father, their Shepherd, now as well as heretofore; and he is every way as able to help them, and accordingly will support, and in due time deliver, them, and this Faith sees and rests assured of, *Isa.* 51. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Awake, awake, put on Strength, O Arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient Days, in the Generations of old; art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the Dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the Sea, the Waters of the great Deep, that hath made the Depths of the Sea a Way for the ransomed to pass over? &c.* So again, *2 Cor.* 1. 9, 10. *But we had the Sentence of Death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God who raiseth the Dead, who delivereth us from so great a Death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us:* Mark, Faith, you see, argues from what God has done, to what he will do, for his poor Church and People; and what Bottom or Ground has it so to do but his Unchangeableness? Let *Sion* therefore, the Church and People of God, take heed of that Language, which he spake of old, *Isa.* 49. 14. *Sion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me:* And as *Jacob* elsewhere, *My Way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgment is passed over by my God;* for God must change e'er this can be. True, God may permit his Church to be sorely afflicted, as at this Day; but 'tis but to Illustrate his own Glory the more in Her Support and Deliverance.

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3. God being unchangeable, his Enemies shall be destroyed, they shall all die and perish; I mean his incorrigible, implacable, Enemies, who will not stoop to the Scepter of his Kingdom. God may, and sometimes does, permit his and his Peoples Enemies to *Practise and Prosper*, and that for a long time together; he lets them alone in their Sins and Oppositions against both himself and them; yea, he even fills their Belly with his hid Treasure, (as you have it) *Psal. 17. 14.* he lets them enjoy some of the best of outward Comforts and Contentments, and that in great Fulness; which oftentimes proves a great Burthen and Temptation to his poor afflicted People, such as is ready even to sink and bear them down: So it was with the Psalmist, *Psal. 73. beg.* and 'tis so many times with us; but remember that God is unchangeable, and being unchangeable, though he may permit his and his Peoples Enemies to *Practise and Prosper* for a time, yet not always; no, they shall be destroyed, and that with a great Destruction: Pray observe how things issued at last in that very Psalm, *Psal. 73. 10, &c.* Surely thou didst set them in slippery Places, thou castedst them down into Destruction; how are they brought into Desolation as in a Moment? They are utterly consumed with Terrors, &c. Pray observe, he was not more offended at, nor was he more ready to envy their Prosperity before, than now he wonders at their Ruin and Destruction: So *Psal. 37. 35, &c.* I have seen the Wicked in great Power, and spreading himself like a green Bay-tree, yet he passed away, and lo! he was not: Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found; the Transgressors shall be destroyed together, the End of the Wicked shall be cut off. So *Deut. 32. 35, 35.* To me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence, (says God in Reference to his and his Peoples Enemies) their Foot shall slide in due time, for the Day of their Calamity is at hand, and the things which shall come upon them make haste,

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for the Lord shall judge his People, &c. Still you see, though God permit his and his Peoples Enemies to prosper for a time, yet at last they are destroyed, and as sure as God is unchangeable they shall be destroyed. Pray compare but my Text with the Verse immediately preceeding, *Mal. 3. 5, 6. I will come near to you to Judgment, (says God) and I will be a swift Witness against the Sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against false Swearers, and against all that oppress the Hireling in his Wages, the Widow and the Fatherless, and that fear not me, saith the Lord; q. d. I'll suddenly and terribly destroy all mine Enemies, all that go on in their Sinning against me:* But how shall we be assured of this? He tells you in the next Words, *for I am the Lord, I change not; q. d. as sure as I am God and Unchangeable they shall be destroyed.* O, Sirs, tho' God permits his and his Peoples Enemies to Prosper for a time, yet he always certainly destroys them in the Conclusion, and he will do so still, because he is unchangeable: God is every way the same that ever he was, the same in Holiness, Jealousie, Justice, Power, that ever he was; He is as Holy now as ever he was, and so does hate Sin as much as ever he did: He is as just now as ever he was, and so as ready and propense to take Vengeance as ever; he is as jealous now, as jealous for his Name, Worship, Gospel, and People, as ever he was, and so will as little bear with the Opposers and Abusers of them; he is as wise and powerful now as ever, and so as able to deal with his Enemies: 'Tis a great Scripture that *Job 9. 4. He is wise in Heart, and mighty in Strength; who ever barained himself against him and prospered? O never any yet did, and never any shall:* No, but *Psal. 68. 21. He will wound the Head of his Enemies, and the hairy Scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his Trespases:* O that all the Enemies of God and his People, and all
Rebellious

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Rebellious Impenitent ones would lay this to Heart.

4. God being unchangeable, the Purposes and Promises of his Grace to his Church and People shall certainly be accomplisht. God's Heart, my Beloved, has been full of Counsels and Purposes of Love towards his People from all Eternity, and he has also made many blessed Promises to them, *Promises that are exceeding Great and Precious*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. because full of exceeding Great and Precious Things: Greatness and Preciousness do not often meet together; many things are Great, but then they are not Precious; and many things are Precious, but then they are not Great; but in the Promises of God to his Church and People Greatness and Preciousness do meet: Now look, whatever Purposes God has had in his Heart, and whatever Promises he has made in his Word to his People, they shall all be accomplisht, because he is an unchangeable God, he is the same now that he was when he took up those Purposes, and made those Promises, and therefore will assuredly make them all good in the due Season; and so much he tells us, (*Isa. 46. 9, 10, 11. I am God, (says he) and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the End from the Beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure; I have spoken, and I'll bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it: Mark, first he asserts his Godhead and Unchangeableness, and then he tells you all his Pleasure shall stand and be accomplisht. God being unchangeable (First) none can turn him, or make him alter his Mind; Job 23. 13, 14. He is in one Mind, and who can turn him? And what his Soul desireth, even that he doth; for he performeth the thing that is appointed for me, &c.* The wisest and most resolved among Men may possibly be wrought upon, and brought over from

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what they purposed; but 'tis not so with God. (Secondly) None can hinder him from or in his making good his Purposes and Promises, *Iſa. 43. 13. Before the Day was, I am he, and there is none that can deliver out of my Hand: I will work, and who shall let it?* Poor Soul, whoever thou art, that art one of the Lord's People, look back to the Eternal Counsels and Purposes of his Love towards thee, and thou wilt find them a great Deep, a Fountain of Infinite Sweetness; in them thou wilt see Heaps of Love, and Treasures of Grace; and then turn thine Eye to the Promises of his Covenant, which thou wilt find unexpressively sweet, and exactly suitable to thy Condition, to all thy Wants, and then know assuredly that the whole, both of the one and the other, shall be accomplished to thee in due Season: 'Tis true indeed, his Counsels may seem to us to be frustrated, and his Promises may for a time be deferred and delayed, insomuch that our hasty unbelieving Hearts may be ready to conclude, that they will never be accomplished; saying with the *Psalmist, Does his Promise fail for evermore? Psal. 77. 8.* But, Soul, wait a while, and they shall all be made good to a Tittle. Has he promised to pardon thee, to cleanse thee, to give thee a new Heart, and a new Spirit, to write his Law in thine Heart? Has he promised to save thee, and lodge thee at last in his own Bosom? Then know it shall all be accomplished: Oh how sweet is this! Oh to fasten upon a Promise, and see it sure to be made good, as in God's Unchangeableness we may, there we may see all as sure as if 'twere already accomplished. Oh what strong Consolation does this afford? What unexpressible Sweetness will this give unto a Soul?

5. God being unchangeable, the Saints are unchangeably Happy, and have a blessed *Affylum* to flee unto under all those Changes and Emergencies that

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that may at any time come upon them. Pray mark, my Beloved, God is the Saint's God and Portion, and in him does their Happiness lye; he therefore being unchangeable, they have an unchangeable Happiness, they are an Happy People, and they will be unchangeably so. *The Counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations;* and what then? *Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord, and the People whom he hath chosen for his own Inheritance,* Psal. 33. 11, 12. The Saints (as one well observes) are in all Respects a Blessed People; they are Blessed in the Pardon of their Sins: *Blessed is the Man whose Sins are forgiven,* Psal. 32. 1. They are Blessed in Regard of the Disposition of their Souls: *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, blessed are the Meek, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness,* Mat. 5. 3, 4, 6. They are Blessed in their Obedience, and Walking with God: *Blessed are the Undeified in the Way,* Psal. 119. 1. They are Blessed in their Hopes and Expectations: *Blessed are they that wait for God,* Isa. 30. 18. Thus they are every Way, and in all Respects, a Blessed People; but here lyes the Perfection and Top-Glory of their Blessedness, and what indeed comprehends all the rest in it, namely, that the unchangeable God is their God and Portion: *Happy is the People whose God is the Lord,* Psal. 144. 15. Oh, this speaks them to be infinitely and unchangeably Happy, and accordingly they should live upon him, and that under all their Streights and Difficulties. Oh, Sirs, what is there that this will not support and comfort you under? Do your Friends and Comforts here change? However, God, your best Friend and Comfort, changes not, and that is enough. Do times and Seasons change, and that for the worse, from Sunshine to Storms? Weil, however, Soul, thy God changes not, and that is enough to sweeten

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all. Dost thou thy self change? *Changes and Wars are upon thee*, and which is the worst of it, thy Spirit changes, it will not keep even with God one Hour; well, still thy God changes not, and that is enough. Do new Temptations arise, and old Corruptions break out anew? Does Guilt revive, and recur upon thee? Be it so, yet thy God is unchangeable, and so can and will relieve and succour thee now as well as formerly, and that is enough. Yea, do God's Dispensations change towards thee? He did smile, now he frowns; he did lift up, now he casts down; the Light of his Countenance did shine brightly upon thee, now 'tis veil'd and clouded: Well, however, thy God himself changes not; his Heart, his Counsel, his Covenant, his Love, are still the same towards thee that ever they were, howbeit the Dispensation be changed. Oh, this One Word, God is Mine, and he is Unchangeable, has Infinite Sweetness in it, and it speaks me to be Infinitely and Unchangeably Happy. Oh you that are the People of God, labour to see and rejoice in this Happiness of yours: Which that you may the better do, let me add only Two short Words to this, and I will shut up the whole Discourse.

1. Consider, that as your God is unchangeable, so you are unchangeably interested in him. This unchangeable God is unchangeably your God; what, though God be unchangeable, (may some poor Soul say) what will that avail me? My Interest in him, I fear, will change and fail, there will shortly be an end of that: No, Soul, the unchangeable God being indeed thine, he is thine for ever: So the Church, *This God is our God for ever and ever, Ps. 48. 14.* O Soul, thou, through Infinite, Free, and Rich, Grace, hast a Covenant-Interest in, and Relation to, the unchangeable God, and this Interest and Relation of thine is a firm, lasting,

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lasting, and unchangeable, Interest and Relation : Nothing that either Men, Devils, or Lusts, can do, can possibly break or null it : And so he tells us, *Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32.* of which we have spoken before. I shall here only add a Saying or Two of *Austin*, *The Chief Good*, (says he) *which is God*, is neither given to such as are unwilling to have him, nor taken away from such as are unwilling to part with him : And elsewhere, *No Man does or can lose thee*, O God, (says he) *unless he that is unwilling to lose thee, and go without thee ; and he that willingly parts with thee, whither does he go ? Whither does he flee ? But from thee smiling, to thee frowning ; from thee a reconciled Father, to thee an angry Judge ? O Soul, as long as thou art willing to have God thine, so long he shall be thine ; yea, more, thine Interest in him depends not upon thy Willingness of it, but upon his unchangeable Love and Covenant ; and his Love and Covenant both must change, e'er thine Interest in him can fade and change.*

2. Consider, as your God is unchangeable, so after a while you shall unchangeably enjoy him, and be with him, your Vision and Fruition of him shall be unchangeable. *Our Happiness* (says *Austin*) *is begun here in Election, but 'tis perfected hereafter in Fruition.* You that have chosen the unchangeable God, you shall after a few Days enjoy the God whom you have chosen ; your Happiness is great in your chusing of him, but how much more great will it be in your enjoying of him ? *Psal. 73. 24. 25. Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsels, and afterwards receive me unto Glory ; whom have I in Heaven but thee ; and there is none upon Earth I desire beside thee ; q. d. I have chosen, and I do again chuse, thee for my God and Portion ; and some Enjoyment I have of thee here, and more I shall have hereafter in Heaven ; I shall e'er long be taken to enjoy thee in thy Glory, fully, immediately, and*
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for ever ; for thou art mine, and I have made a Solemn Choice of thee. O Saints, the unchangeable God is yours, and some Communion you have with him here in the Ways of his Grace, which is Sweet and Happy ; but after you have enjoyed him in the Ways of his Grace a while here, you shall be taken to the unchangeable Enjoyment of him in his Glory above, which will be infinitely more Sweet and Happy ; your Enjoyment of him here is low and remote, as well as changeable and unconstant ; but your Enjoyment of him Above will be full, close, and unchangeable : Here you have now and then a gracious Visit from him ; he visits you in this Duty, and that Ordinance, in this Mercy, and in that Affliction ; but Oh how short many times are those Visits of his ? Alas ! he is gone again in a Moment : But after a while you shall enjoy him in his Glory, and there you shall not have a short Visit now and then only, but his constant Presence for ever : *We shall be ever with the Lord, 1 Thes. 4. 17.* Oh Blessed Souls ! There he will unchangeably delight in you, unchangeably shine upon you, unchangeably communicate himself in his Grace and Glory to you ; Oh how Sweet and Blessed will this be ! Well, for a Close of all, Saints, the unchangeable God is unchangeably your God ; and howbeit your Visions of him be yet but dark, and your Communion with him but low ; yet wait a while, and the Day will break, and all your Shadows shall flee away, you shall change your ebbing Waters for a full Tide, your Glimmerings and Dawnings for a Noon-day, your imperfect Beginnings for a full and perfect Consummation of Communion with him : Howbeit there be now a Veil upon his Face, that you cannot behold him ; yet wait a while, and the Veil shall be taken away, and you shall behold his Face, his Glory, for ever ; and that so as to be fully changed
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into the Image thereof, and eternally solaced and satisfied therein, suitable to that Word, *Psal. 17. 15.* (with which I'll close all) *As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy Likeness. Amen.*

THE

True Rest :

OR,

The Souls Rest in GOD,

Opened -and Improved from

P S A L. 116. 7:

Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul.

C H A P. I.

An Introduction to the Words. What that Rest is which David calls upon his Soul to return unto. The Sum of the Words, and of our Intendment from them, laid down in one general Position.

IT is the great Happiness of the Saints, that howbeit they meet with many sore Troubles and Afflictions here in this World; yea, though they meet with little else but Trouble and Affliction here, yet there is a Rest to come for them, a Sweet Rest, a Blessed Rest, a Glorious Rest, a Rest not liable to either Decay or Disturbance for ever: So
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the Apostle tells us, *Heb. 4. 9. There remaineth a Rest to the People of God*: Nor is this all their Happiness; for not only does there remain a Rest for them hereafter, but there is also a Rest, a Sweet Rest, a Blessed Rest, which they do, or may, attain unto here; a Rest even in the midst of all those Troubles, which here they are exposed unto: And Blessed be God for this Rest; Rest is sweet, but Rest in Trouble, Rest in the midst of many and sore Troubles, Oh how Sweet, how Glorious, is this! Now this is the Rest which I would a little contemplate and speak unto, as the proper Subject of these Words of the Psalmist, *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul*: Which Words are David's Call or Command to his Soul to return unto its Rest: And the only thing to be enquired into for the clearing of them, and therein for the making Way to what we intend from them, is, what this Rest is which David here calls upon his Soul to return unto; and I find it expounded Two Ways.

1. Some expound it of God himself, God in Christ, who indeed is the Rest, as well as the Refuge, of his People: God is *centrum quietativum*, (as the Schools speak) the proper, quieting, resting, Center of the Soul, and in him alone can it truly rest: Thus *Vatablus*, a Learned Man, expounds it; *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul*; that is, (says he) *Return to him with whom thou wilt find the most perfect Rest; to wit, unto God*: Indeed with him, and in him, alone is perfect Rest to be found, as in its Place may be shewn.

2. Others expound it of a quiet, serene, sedate, well composed, Frame and Posture of Soul; and thus *Calvin* and others expound it: *That some Interpreters* (says he) *do by Rest here understand God, is strained*; 'tis rather to be taken for a tranquil and well-composed Frame of Soul: And indeed the Scope of

of the Context looks this Way; for mark, David had been in great Affliction, *The Sorrows of Death had compassed him about, and the Pains of Hell had got hold upon him, as you find Vers. 3.* and hereupon there had followed, as is too probable, great Perplexity of Spirit within, great Murmurings and Tumults, Frettings and Discomposures, in his Soul; and now he calls off his Soul from those unquiet Motions and Agitations, and commands it to return to Rest; that is, to a calm, quiet, serene, sedate, and well-composed Frame again. Thus also another Judicious Interpreter expounds it; *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul; as if he should say, O my Soul, hitherto thou hast been tossed up and down, among the Waves and Storms of Sorrows, Doubts, and Desperation; thou hast been greatly afflicted and disturbed, when the Sorrows of Death and Hell did press in upon thee; and sometimes such has been the Case with thee, that thou couldest see no Port, no Haven, in which thou mightest rest; but now these Storms being over and gone, and a Port opening it self to thy Faith, in which thou mayest Rest, now put in and return to thy Rest; now be quiet and joyful, as knowing where thou oughtest to rest.* Thus this Rest is doubly expounded. Now I shall exclude neither of these Senses, but rather joyn them both together, and by Rest here understand the Soul's being at Rest in God, in whom alone Rest is to be found for Souls: Nor am I alone in so doing; for I find a Learned Man so to understand it; *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul; that is, (says he) be no longer filled with Disquietment and Perturbation, but acquiesce and sit down satisfied in God, thy Rest and Portion for ever: Accordingly take the Sum of the whole, and so of my Intendment in this Position.*

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Doct. *That the Souls of the Saints should be at Rest in God : Or, the Frame and Posture of Soul the Saints should live in, is a Frame and Posture of Rest in God.*

Whatever the Saints Condition may be, or whatever Dispensations they may be exercised withal, yet still their Souls should be at Rest in God : *David's* Soul was for a time gone off its Rest, 'twas gone off from that Sedateness, Composure, and Satisfaction, which it was wont to have in God; his Condition was full of Trouble and Disturbance, and his Soul was filled with Trouble and Disturbance too; but here tacitly at least he rebukes his Soul for this, and expressly commands it to return to Rest again, to a Rest in God, and that as its proper Posture; for mark how he speaks, *Return unto [thy Rest] O my Soul, [thy Rest]* the proper Posture of the Souls of the Saints is to be at Rest in God, and that Posture they should be in at all times, and in all Conditions. What the Soul's Rest in God is, what Obligations the Saints are under to be thus at Rest in God, the Sweetness and Excellency of the Frame, with a Call to all to live in this Frame and Posture, and Helps in Order thereunto, are the Things which will properly fall under Consideration in our Procedure on this Argument.

C H A P. II.

What the Soul's Rest in God is, opened; and when the Soul may be said to be at Rest in Him.

BUT what is it for a Soul to be at Rest in God, or to live in a Posture of Rest in God? In general 'tis for a Soul to sit down satisfied with
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what God does as best, and with what God is, as all; and so this Rest of the Soul in God lyes in Two things. (First) In a free and chearful Submission to the Divine Will and Providence. (Secondly) In a full and ample Satisfaction in and with the Divine Presence and Fulness: And Oh the Beauty, the Sweetness, the Amiability, that both these carry in them! A little of each.

1. 'Tis to sit down satisfied with what God doth as best, and so it lyes in a free and chearful Submission to the Divine Will and Providence, the Will and Providence of God concerning him: The Soul, through Grace, gets right Apprehensions of God's Will and Providence concerning him; he looks upon the Will of God to be Sovereign, a Righteous, a Wise, and a Good, Will; and here-upon he sits down satisfied with it, whatever it does with him, whatever it allows and orders out concerning him.

1. The Soul looks upon the Will and Providence of God concerning him to be a Sovereign Will and Providence; a Will and Providence, which does, which may do, with him whatever it pleases, and so he acquiesces in it. *It is the Lord, (said Good old Eli) let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. 3. 18.* Mark how he bows and submits his Soul to the Divine Will and Providence; it is the Lord, it is a Sovereign God, a God that may do with me and mine whatever he will; and in the Sense of this his Soul freely submits. It was a dreadful and terrible Message which Samuel told him from the Lord; but so dreadful and terrible as it was, yet having his Eye upon the Sovereignty of God, he freely acquiesces. Suitable whereunto is the Observation of a Learned Man upon this Place; *Eli (saith he) in these Words expresses great Patience, and a great Consent or Agreement with the Divine Will; he did not expostulate with God, but*

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humbly complied and comported with him. God, my Beloved, has an absolute Sovereignty over us all, and may do with us as he pleases: 'Tis what he challenges to himself, as his Prerogative; *All Souls are mine*, (says he) *Ezek. 18. 4.* mine; to do with them, to dispose of them, as I will: And you know how God asserts this his Sovereignty in *Jer. 18. 6.* *O House of Israel, cannot I do with you as the Potter?* (says the Lord) *Behold, as the Clay is in the Potter's Hand, so are ye in my Hand, O House of Israel.* Pray mark, he had before, at *Vers. 4.* shewn them how the Potter dealt by the Clay, and what an absolute Power he had over it, making it a Vessel, and marring it again, as he pleased; and now here in *Vers. 6.* says he, *Cannot I do with you as this Potter doth with his Clay?* I can; *behold, as the Clay is in the Hand of the Potter, so are ye in mine Hand; i. e.* I have an absolute Power over you, to do with you, and dispose of you, as I see good, and I may make or marr you upon the Wheel of my Providence as I please: And you know how God by the Apostle argues in that greatest of Cases, *Rom. 9. 21.* *Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour?* In which Words God asserts his absolute Sovereignty to dispose of all Men as to their Eternal Estates as he pleases: Thus he has an absolute Sovereignty over all: Now the Holy Soul apprehending this Sovereignty in God, falls under the Awe and Dread of it, and accordingly acquiesces in his Will, whatever it be.

2. The Soul looks upon the Will and Providence of God concerning him to be an Holy and Righteous, as well as a Sovereign, Will and Providence, and upon that Account also acquiesces therein. *The Lord is Righteous*, (said the Church) *Lam. 1. 18.* *The Lord is Righteous, for I have rebelled*
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against his Commandment ; q. d. 'Tis true, my Sorrow is great, and mine Affliction heavy ; but God is Just and Holy in it, 'tis no more than, nor in Truth so much as, my Sins have deserved : Indeed, God's Dealings with her were very terrible and amazing ; but yet, apprehending the Righteousness of God in them, She submits to him under all : So Dan. 9. 7. *O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us Confusion of Face* : They saw the Righteousness of God in his Dealings with them, and so were at Rest in his Will. God is *Righteous* (the Scripture tells us) *in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works, and he is a Just Lord that doth, that can do, no Wrong, no Iniquity*, Zeph. 3. 5. Now the Holy Soul gets a Sight of this, and is awed with the Sense thereof, and accordingly acquiesces in God's Will: True, (says he) this and that is sharp, it smarts sorely, it runs cross to my carnal Appetite, to my Sense and Reason ; but I am sure God is Holy and Just in all, I have deserved all and more at his Hand ; and in the Sense of this he acquiesces in his Will, and is satisfied with his Dealings.

3. The Soul looks upon the Will and Providence of God concerning him to be a Wise, as well as an Holy, Will and Providence, and thereupon also bows to it, and acquiesces in it. God, my Beloved, is *the only Wise God*, and all his Works are done in Wisdom ; his Will is a Wise Will, a Will guided and ordered by Counsel ; he *works all things according to the Counsel of his own Will*, Eph. 1. 11. God is never out in what he does, but does all as becomes an Only and an Infinitely Wise God ; which the Holy Soul getting a Sight and Sense of, he freely acquiesces in whatever the Will of God is concerning him, and rests fully satisfied with what God does : In Job 1. 22. we read *that in all this Job sinned not, neither charged he God* foolishly

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foolishly : In all this, that is, in all his Trials and Afflictions, though many, though great, (in all this Job sinned not, neither charged he God foolishly; or, (as you have it in the Margent of some of your Bibles) he did not attribute Folly to God; he sinned not by attributing of Folly to God; but he worshipped and adored the Divine Wisdom, the Wisdom of God, in all his Dealings with him; he acquitted God's Providence of Folly, and bowed to the Infinite Wisdom thereof, and was satisfied with all as best for him: All this, says the Holy Soul, is the Work of a Wise Will, regulated by Counsel; true, all runs cross to my Will and my outward Interest, but 'tis all ballanced by Infinite Wisdom, and I am satisfied therewith: Thus he is at Rest in God.

4. The Soul looks upon the Will and Providence of God concerning him to be a Good, as well as a Wise, Will and Providence, and thus also acquiesces in it. The *Psalmist* tells us, that *all the Paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth, to such as keep his Covenant and his Testimonies*, Psal. 25. 10: By the *Paths* of the Lord here we are to understand his Providences: Now (says he) these are all Mercy and Truth to his People; not some, but all, of them, even the hardest and severest, the most dark, terrible, and killing of them; they are all *Mercy and Truth*, Mercy it self, and Truth it self: Whatever the Will and Providence of God brings forth, yet to his People there is Love in all, Goodness in all, Faithfulness in all, and the Holy Soul getting a Sight thereof, sweetly acquiesces, and is at Rest in whatever God does: So David, Psal. 119. 75. *I know, O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in Faithfulness hast afflicted me.* See *Hezekiah* also, Isa. 39. 8. *Good* (says he to *Isaiah*) *is the Word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.* 'Twas a sharp and a severe Word or Mes-

lage which God by *Isaiah* sent him, as you may see in the precedent Verses; but yet he saw Goodness in all, and Kindness in all, and accordingly acquiesced therein: Truly there is Love and Goodness in all God's Dealings with his People, and the Holy Soul seeing it, his Language is, whether God fills or empties, whether he gives or takes away, whether he lifts up or casts down, whether he kills or makes alive; yet there is Love in all Goodness in all, and 'tis best for me: God chuses for me, and disposes of me; better than I could for my self, and I am satisfied with what he does. Thus the Soul gets right Apprehensions of the Will and Providence of God concerning him, and hereupon is sweetly Satisfied, and sits down at Rest in God, in the midst of all he does to him or with him. True, God may deal somewhat severely with him, he may break him with Breach upon Breach, as he did *Job*: He may cause all his Waves and his Billows to pass over him, as he dealt with *David*; but still the Soul looks upon all to be Holy, Just, and Good, and no other than what God in his Sovereignty may do; and so he rests satisfied therewith, he rests content in God and his Will under all, there are no Disquietments or perplexities of Spirit, no Distractions or Discomposures of Soul, no Frettings, no Tumults, no Murmurs, no Risings of Heart against God or his Will; but there is a sweet Calm, Serenity, and Rest, in the Soul; he is in a sedate, serene, Posture in his God; and this Rest in God the *Psalms* speak of, *Psal.* 37. 7. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thy self because him that prospereth in the Way: Resting in God here opposed to Fretting, and so must note quiet, sedate, well-composed, Spirit in God.

2. 'Tis for a Soul to sit down satisfied with what God is, as all, and so it lies in a full and ample

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satisfaction in and with the Divine Presence and Fulness: 'Tis for a Soul to take up in and with the Blessed God, as his Only and All-sufficient Portion and Happiness for ever. God, my Beloved, is an All-sufficient God, he asserts his own All-sufficiency, *Gen. 17. 1. I am God All-sufficient*, (says he to Abraham) *q. d.* I am infinitely sufficient for my self, and I am infinitely sufficient for thee and all my People, to make the one and the other Happy for ever. God is an Inexhaustible Fountain of Light, Life, Love, Blessedness, Perfection, and Glory; and there is all Good in God, and he that has God has all. *To him that overcometh will I give to inherit all things*: And how so? *I will be his God*, *Rev. 21. 17.* He has all Good, all-Happiness, in him, and in him we may find all as in its Fountainfulness and Purity. Now the Soul seeing God to be such a God, and withal looking upon him as his God in Covenant, sits down satisfied with him alone, saying, I have enough, I have all, and so is at Rest in him, whether he has much or little, anything or nothing of this World's Good; whether the Streams run high or low with him, yet here is a Fountain of Infinite Sweetness and Blessedness, and he drinks there, and satisfies himself there; he sees the Fountain is so full, that he needs not the Streams to make him Happy, and accordingly sits down satisfied therewith, and is at Rest: Thus David's Soul was at Rest in God, *Psal. 16. 5, 6. The Lord is the Portion of mine Inheritance, and of my Cup*: Well, and what then? Why, he sits down at Rest in him, *the Lines* (says he) *are fallen to me in pleasant Places, yea, I have a goodly Heritage*; I have enough, enough for Delight, and enough for Satisfaction; I have as much as my Soul can wish or desire; so *Psal. 17. 15. As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy Likeness; in the*

Verse immediately preceding he had spoken of some whose Portion and Happiness is in this World; well, and pray, *David*, where, and in what, is your Portion? Your Happiness? My Portion is in God, and my Happiness is in God, (says he) in the Sight of God, and in the Likeness of God; let others take up their Rest, Portion, and Happiness, where, and in what, they will; God is my Rest, my Portion, my Happiness, my All, for ever: *As for me, I will behold, &c.* Again, *The Lord lives*, (says he) *and blessed be my Rock*, Psal. 18. 46. *q. d.* such and such Comforts are dead and gone, *they are not*, (as *Jacob* spake of his Sons) well, but however God lives still; I have a Living God, and he is a Living Happiness, and that's enough. So 2 Sam. 23. 5. *Although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, and this is all my Salvation, and all my Desire; q. d.* God is my God by Covenant, and here is my Happiness, even all that my Soul can wish, and accordingly he is at Rest in his God: And Ps. 73. 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire in Comparison of thee: My Heart and my Flesh faileth, but God is the Rock of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* How dark soever things lookt with him, yet he looking to his God, was satisfied and at Rest in him, and with him, as infinitely enough for him. The Prophet *Habakkuk* resolved upon the same Course, Hab. 3. 17, 18. *Although the Fig-tree shall not Blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive shall fail, &c. yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation:* He supposes the worst that could come, and yet still resolves to be at Rest in God, and that God alone shall be enough for him, when all other things fail. Thus the Holy Soul sits down satisfied with God alone, setting

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ting God, and an Interest in God, over and against all his Wants, Losses, Burthens, Difficulties, Temptations, as one infinitely able to relieve and satisfy him under all; his Language to God is, Lord, let others take the World, and the good things thereof, give me thy self, and I have enough; run out to broken Cisterns, who will let me have a free Recourse unto the Fountain, and I am satisfied; 'tis true, the Tide of Creature-comforts runs low with me, and on the other Hand the Waves and Surges of Affliction rise high; but God is All-sufficient, and I have enough in him; he sees a little of that Glorious Fulness, Sweetness, and Blessedness, that is in God, and hereupon sings an Holy Requiem unto himself, saying, Soul, take thine Ease, thou hast Goods, Light, Life, Love, Blessedness, Salvation, enough laid up for thee for many Days, yea, for the Days of Eternity; take thine Ease, sit down satisfied in and with thy God alone; hadst thou Ten Thousand Worlds, without him thou hadst nothing, but in him thou hast all; rest thou therefore in him. Thus you see what 'tis for a Soul to be at Rest in God, and when he may be said to be at Rest in him.

C H A P. III.

The great Obligations the Saints are under, thus to live at Rest in God. Several of these Obligations insisted on, as the first Evidence of the Truth of our Proposition.

HAVING seen what 'tis for a Soul to be at Rest in God, our next Work shall be to shew you what Obligations the Saints are under, thus to live at Rest in him, and that as an undeniable Evidence of the Truth of our Position: The Saints are under mighty Obligations thus to be at Rest in God; I shall insist only on Four, which are full of Weight,

and, I beg they may accordingly affect and influence us.

1. The first Obligation the Saints are under to live at Rest in God, is this, The Blessed God hath freely made over himself in his Covenant to them, and that in all his Glorious Riches and Fulness, that in him their Souls might be at Rest: He hath given himself to them as their Rest and Portion; and is not this a mighty Obligation in the Case? God, my Beloved, in the Covenant of his Love, hath freely given and made over himself to his People in all his Riches and Fulness, in all his Excellencies and Perfections, to be used, possessed, and enjoyed, by them, as an All-sufficient Rest, Portion, and Happiness, for ever: This is evident in the very Tenour of the Covenant, and wherever you have a formal Mention or Record of the Covenant in Scripture, this is put in, *I will be your God*: You have Three Great and Solemn Mentions of the Covenant in Scripture, and in all of them this is in: One is *Gen. 17. 7.* another is *Jer. 31. 33, 34.* and the third is *Heb. 8. 10, 11, 12.* In these Places you have the most express Records of the Covenant, God's Covenant with his People, that are in all the Scripture; and in all there is this, *I will be your God*. In the Two latter Places we have other Promises, Promises of Pardon, Cleansing, Teaching, and the like; but in that to *Abraham*, in *Genesis*, we have only this, *I'll be thy God*; for indeed this comprehends all the rest, and all the other Promises that are contained in the Covenant of God, are but Branches growing out of this Root, and do but open this to us: This (as one speaks) is *Caput Fœderis*, the Head or Top of the Covenant; *Anima Fœderis*, (as another) the Soul of the Covenant; *Substantia Fœderis*, (as another) the Life and Substance of the Covenant: And indeed when God says to a Soul, *I'll be thy*
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God, he does therein say, I'll pardon thee, I'll cleanse thee, I'll teach thee, I'll save thee, I'll make thee happy, for ever: For God to be our God, is for God to be and communicate all Good to us, that a God can communicate, and Creatures receive; 'tis for God to love us, to bless us, to care for us, to make us happy, for ever; 'tis for God to give us eternal Life, to be a Friend, a Father, an Husband, and a Saviour, to us. 'Tis (as Luther somewhere expounds it) for God to make over himself in all his Excellencies, Perfections, and Glory; his Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Faithfulness, All-sufficiency, Unchangeableness, and Eternity, to his People, as their Rest and Happiness; to be possess'd and enjoyed by them for their Good for ever. In a Word, for God to say to a poor Creature, I will be thy God, is as much as if he should say, Look, whatever I am, that I will be to thee; and look, whatever I can do, that I will do for thee, so far as thou art capable of the one or the other, to make thee Happy for ever: I am a Fountain of Life, and such will I be to thee; I am a God of Peace and Pardon, and such will I be to thee; I am a God of Grace, of Love, yea, I am a God that is Love it self, and such will I be to thee; I am the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Grace, and such will I be to thee; I'll beget new Mercies for thee every Day: I am a God of Comfort, yea, of all Comfort, and such will I be to thee; I am an Unchangeable, Eternal, All-sufficient, God, and such will I be to thee. I can pardon guilty Souls, break the hardest Hearts, enlighten the darkest Minds, cleanse the impurest Spirits; I can make unbelieving Hearts believing, I can support drooping Spirits, and all this I'll do for thee: I can carry thee through Life and Death, and bring thee safe to Heaven, and there communicate my self to thee for ever, to the filling of thy Soul with De-

light and Satisfaction, and this will I do for thee ; and surely happy is the Soul that has thus the Lord for his God, and well may he sit down satisfied with him, and at rest in him. Now, my Beloved, hath God made over himself in his Covenant to his People, as their Rest, that in him they might find Rest, and should they not be at Rest in him ? O Sirs, is not God enough for us ? Has he laid himself under Bonds to us, to be a God to us, and to do like a God for us ? And should we not rest in him, and satisfie our selves with him alone ? Surely we should.

2. The Second Obligation the Saints are under to live at Rest in God, is this ; they have solemnly voucht and chosen, and often do vouch and chuse, God to be their Rest and Happiness. As God has freely made over himself in his Covenant to them, so they have solemnly voucht and chosen him, and often do solemnly vouch and chuse him, to be their Rest and Happiness. When the Saints first enter into Covenant with God, then do they solemnly chuse and vouch him to be their God and Portion, their Rest and Happiness ; Their Language to God then is, Lord, thou shalt be my Lord, my Rest, my Portion, my Happiness, my All, for ever ; I will have none in Heaven, or on Earth, but thy self. Thus David had chosen God, and he puts his Soul in Mind of it, *Psal. 16. 2. O my Soul, (says he) thou hast said unto God, thou art my Lord ; thou hast chosen God for thy God, thy Portion, thy Happiness ; and upon this Account he calls his Soul to rest in God, and in him he rests, Vers. 5, 6. And as at their first entring into Covenant with God, so also often afterwards, upon several Occasions, do they chuse and vouch God for their Rest, Portion, and Happiness, for ever ; they make new Choices of God, and do lay new Claims to him as theirs, in their Procedure of their Walking*

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ing with him.— Sometimes upon Occasion of outward Troubles and Afflictions, Difficulties and Distresses, they make a new Choice of God, and vouch him afresh for their Rest and Happiness: So David, Psal. 31. 14. *I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said, thou art my God:* Here he makes a new Choice of God, and lays a new Claim to him as his; and when, or upon what Occasion, was this? When he was surrounded with outward Troubles, as appears, Vers. 10, 11, 12, 13. *My Life is spent with Grief, and my Tears with Sighing; I was a Reproach among all my Enemies, I am forgotten, as a dead Man out of Mind: I have heard the Slander of many, Fear was on every Side, they devised to take away my Life;* and being thus distressed, he flies to God, and chuses him afresh, and lays a fresh Claim to him: So again, Psal. 142. 4, 5. *I looked on my right Hand, and beheld, but there was no Man that would know me, Refuge failed me, no Man cared for my Soul: Well, and what then? Why he runs to God, and vouches him afresh for his: I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my Refuge and my Portion in the Land of the Living:* So the Church in her great Troubles and Afflictions does in like Manner: *The Lord is my Portion,* (saith she) Lam. 3. 24.— Sometimes upon Occasion of some Eminent Mercy or Deliverance wrought by God for them, they do make a new Choice of God, and vouch him afresh to be theirs: So those, Exod. 15. 2. *The Lord is my Strength and Song, and he is become my Salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare him an Habitation; my Father's God, and I will exalt him.* He wrought a signal Deliverance for them; he had carried them through the Red Sea, delivered them from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, whom he drowned for their Sakes; and now they sing a Song of Praise to God, and vouch him to be their God; they renew Covenant with God, and

The True Rest : Or,

to their Choice of him, as their Rest, their Portion, their All, for ever. Thus the Church does, *Psal. 48. 14. This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our God and Guide even unto Death :* God had done great things for her, and hereupon she vouches him afresh for hers. *David* often does the like, — sometimes again upon Occasion of some fresh Discoveries made of God in his Love and Beauty to them, or their being taken into some near and intimate Communion with him, then they chuse him afresh, and vouch him to be theirs afresh: So, *Psal. 73. 25, 26. the Psalmist, whoever he was, did; Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? (says he to God) and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee ; thou art the Rock of my Heart, and my Portion for ever :* Here is a new Choice of God made by this Holy Man ; and upon what Occasion was it ? Why, he had been with God in his Sanctuary ; that is, he had been conversing with God in his Word and Ordinances, he had had some new Displays and Discoveries of his Love, Beauty, and Excellency, made to him ; and hereupon he chuses God afresh, and vouches him to be his All, both in Heaven and upon Earth. So, you know, when the Spouse had been led into the Banqueting-House by Christ, and had had the Banner of his Love displayed over Her ; when she had been feasted by him in his House of Wine, when she made a new Choice of Christ, and vouches him for hers afresh : *My Beloved is mine, and I am his, Cant. 2. 6.* Thus the Saints, both at first, and also often afterwards in their walking with God, have chosen, and do chuse, him to be their God and Portion, their Rest and Happiness, and should they not then rest in him ? Surely, this Choice of theirs calls aloud, and should be a mighty Obligation upon them, to live at Rest in God for ever.

3. The third Obligation the Saints are under to live

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live at Rest in God, is this; God is at Rest in them: As the Saints have chosen God for their Rest, so God hath chosen them for his Rest, and his Soul is at Rest in them: *Psal. 132. 13, 14. The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his Habitation; this is my Rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* Zion here is a Type of the Church and People of God, and as such God's Soul is at Rest in her; *This is my Rest*: The Saints are, and to Eternity will be, a Delight and Solace to the Soul of God; God is indeed delighted, and at Rest in his People, above all the Works of his Hands; hence the Church is called *The Delight of God, Isa. 62. 4.* Hence also he is said to *rejoice over them with Joy, to rest in his Love upon them, and to joy over them with singing, Zeph. 3. 18.* God is in some sort more delighted and at Rest in his People, than in the Angels themselves; and indeed he sees a greater Beauty and Glory upon them than upon the Angels; he looks upon the Angels as standing in their own Beauty, their own Holiness and Righteousness only; but he looks upon his Saints as standing in, and clothed with, the Beauty and Righteousness of Christ, and that is much more Glorious than the Angels: The Beauty and Righteousness of the Angels is the Beauty and Righteousness but of Creatures; but the Beauty and Righteousness of the Saints is the Beauty and Righteousness of him that is God-man, God as well as Man, *Rom. 8. 17.* and on this Account God's Soul is more at Rest in them, God is chiefly delighted and at Rest in himself, and the Perfections of his own Being; next to himself his Soul is delighted and at Rest in Christ, as Mediator: *Behold mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth, (saith the Father of him) Isa. 42. 1.* and next to Christ the Mediator, his Soul is at Rest in his Saints and People in and through Christ; he
looks

looks upon them not as they are in themselves, but as they are in Christ; not as apart from Christ, but as made one with Christ, and so as shining in his Beauty, and cloathed with his Righteousness, as participating in all his Amiability; he looks upon them, not so much according to what they are at present, as according to what they are in the Counsels of his own Love, and what he intends to make them, and so they are *all Glorious*, both *within* and *without*; and accordingly he is delighted in them. Now, is God's Soul at Rest in them? And should not their Souls be at Rest in him? O what a mighty Obligation is this upon them always to be at Rest in God!

4. The Fourth Obligation the Saints are under to live at Rest in God, is this; They hope to, and assuredly shall live at, Rest in God, and with God for ever in Heaven: Heaven is a State of Rest; so the Apostle represents it; *There remaineth a Rest to the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. 'tis a State of Rest in God, and with God, and in this Rest the Saints hope to live, and live for ever: Hence they are said to *have this Hope*: Every one that hath this Hope, 1 Joh. 3. 3. *this Hope*, that is, the Hope of seeing Christ, and being made like him in the other World, the Hope of Heaven, the Eternal Rest: Saints then are Persons that have this Hope, hence also Heaven, and the Rest to come, is called *Hope*, the Hope which is laid up for you, Col. 1. 5. and the *Blessed Hope*, looking for the *Blessed Hope*, Tit. 2. 13. In both these Places Heaven and the coming Rest is called *Hope*; for *Hope* here (as Calvin and others observe) is put for the Object of Hope, or the Good hoped for: But why is it called Hope? For this among other Reasons, because 'tis the great Object of the Saints Hopes; 'tis what they hope, and look, and long, for: And as they hope to, so assuredly they shall live at, Rest in God, and

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and with God for ever; 'tis what remains to them, and they shall in due time attain unto it: Hence 'tis said to be *laid up for them in Heaven*, in that prequoted Place, *Col. 1. 5.* which (as Calvin also observes) notes the Certainty of it, and of their Enjoying of it; 'tis what they cannot miss of, when the Apostle speaks of an *Hope laid up in Heaven for us*; he signifies to us, that the Saints ought therefore to rest sure and certain of the Promise of eternal Life, as if they had a Treasure already hid, and laid up in a most safe Place. Now do the Saints hope to, and accordingly shall they live at, Rest in God and with God for ever; and should they not be at Rest in God here? Surely this is a mighty Obligation upon them to be always at Rest in him. Thus you have seen some of those Obligations the Saints lye under to live at Rest in God; which though but some of them, yet are sufficient to evince the Truth of our Position, namely, that they should always be at Rest in him.

C H A P. IV.

The Truth asserted; further evidenced from the Excellency of this Frame of Soul; the Worth and Excellency whereof is discovered in several Particulars.

AS the Saints are under many great and weighty Obligations to be always at Rest in God, so to be always at Rest in God is a Choice and an Excellent Frame and Posture of Soul for the Saints to live in; 'tis indeed the best and most becoming Frame of Soul, they can possibly be found in in this World, which may give further Evidence to our Assertion: Now I shall shew you a little of the Worth and Excellency of this Frame and Posture of Soul in a few Scripture Propositions about it.

1. To be at Rest in God is a very Gracious Frame and Posture of Soul; a Frame and Posture of Soul which carries much of the Life and Power of
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of Grace and Godliness in it : And O what an Excellent Frame and Posture must this then be? The more of the Life and Power of Grace and Godliness any Frame or Posture of Soul carries in it, the more Excellent it is ; now there is no Frame nor Posture of Soul, that I know of, which carries more of the Life and Power of Grace and Godliness in it than this of being at Rest in God does : Herein indeed does the main, if not the whole, of the Life and Power of Grace and Godliness consist ; for pray, what is Grace and Godliness, and wherein doth it consist, but in an holy Subjection to, and Acquiescence in, the Blessed God ? To bow and submit to God, as our Lord, and to chuse and acquiesce in God, as our Happiness, this is Grace, this is Godliness ; both which I take to be comprehended in *Psal. 6. 2.* where David puts his Soul in Mind that he had both given up himself to God, and also chosen him for his Happiness, saying, *O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, my Ruler, my Happiness: This, my Beloved, is Grace or Godliness ; and the more of this there is found in us, the more Gracious we are ; and what is this, but to be at Rest in God as we have opened it ? A restless and unquiet Spirit argues much of the Power of Sin ; and shews that Grace has gotten but little, if any, Dominion in the Soul ; and therefore 'tis made both the Character and Judgment of wicked Men, that they cannot rest: *The Wicked* (saith the Prophet) *are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt, there is no Peace to the Wicked, Isa. 57. 20, 21.* 'Tis meant of their own inward Unquietness and Restlessness of Spirit : Calvin hereby understands *perpetuas animæ excitationes atque perturbationes*, perpetual Tossings and Perturbations of Mind ; and he speaks (I remember) thus: *This Similitude of a Sea is an Elegant Similitude, and most apt to set forth the Inquietude of wicked Men ;**

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Men; for the Sea is troubled in it self, though it be not driven by Winds, nor tossed with Storms and Tempest, but its own Waves fight one with another, and break one another; in like manner wicked Men are troubled with intestine Evil, which is fixt and rooted in their own Minds. Thus a restless, unquiet, Spirit argues much of the Power of Sin in the Soul, and shews that Grace has got but little, if any, Dominion there: So on the other Hand, a Spirit at Rest in God must carry much of the Life and Power of Grace and Godliness in it. This indeed is a great Part of the Kingdom of God; for the Kingdom of God (the Apostle tells us) consists not in Meats and Drinks, but in Righteousness, in Peace, and in the Joys of the Holy Ghost, Rom. 14. 17. In Peace, that is, (as a Learned Man expounds it) in an Holy Rest, and Quiet of Soul in God.

2. To be at Rest in God, is a ready Frame and Posture of Soul; a Frame and Posture of Soul, which renders a Man ready and prepared for every Call of God to him; and must not that be an Excellent Frame? God, my Beloved, may call us to what he pleases, to what Services he pleases, and to what Conditions he pleases; he may call us to what Services he pleases; besides the general Duties of Christianity which are incumbent upon all, he may call us to what special Work and Services he pleases; he may call us to do, and he may call us to suffer, and 'tis a Blessed Thing to be fitted and prepared for the Call of God; and who more so than he that lives at Rest in him? Alas, to such an one no Work, no Duty, no Service, is unseasonable; such an one is fit to Pray, and fit to Praise; fit to Hear, and fit to Meditate; fit to search his own Heart, and fit to enquire into the Counsels of God; he is fit to do, and fit to suffer the Will of God: *My Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed*; or, (as you have it in the Margin

Margin of some of your Bibles) *my Heart is prepared, O God, my Heart is prepared, Psal. 57. 7.* If you look back upon the first Verse; you will find his Soul sweetly at Rest in God, *For (says he) O God, my Soul trusteth in thee, in the Shadow of thy Wings will I make my Refuge ;* and being thus at Rest in God, his Heart is prepared : 'Tis in a ready Posture for Duty and Service ; O, 'tis the Restlessness and Discomposure of our Hearts that unfits and indisposes us for our Work and Duty. When the Israelites were filled with Anguish of Spirit, they could not hear Moses, *Exod. 6. 9.* and when Jonah his Spirit was off its Rest, though he were an Eminent Prophet of God, he could not pray but very peevishly and unbecomingly, *Jon. 4. 2, 3.* A restless Spirit is unfit for the ordinary Duties of Christianity : But now take a Soul that is indeed at Rest in God, and he is fit not only for the general Duties of Christianity, such as Prayer, Hearing, or the-like ; but even for whatever Work or Duty God shall call him out unto, though never so difficult, or never so mean ; Such an one may in his Place and Station say, as I remember, one brings in David speaking to God, *Lord, (says he) if thou wilt make me a Shepherd to keep Sheep, or if thou wilt make me a King to govern thy People, behold, mine Heart is prepared, I am in a ready Posture for the one or the other.* Oh, what a sweet Frame is this ? God may also call us to what Condition he pleases, to a Condition of Fulness or of Want, of Prosperity or Affliction, and the like ; now whatever Condition he calls to, the Soul that is at Rest in him, is ready for it. Does God call him to Sufferings, to take up and bear the Cross ? He is ready for this Call of God, for he can rejoice, *yea, glory, in the Cross, Rom. 5. 3.* He can sing in a Prison, as Paul and Sylas did, *Act. 16. 25.* Does God call him to Fulness ? *He knows how to abound ;* Does God

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God call him to Wants? *He knows how to be abased:* As Paul did, *Phil. 4. 12.* Does God call him to Mourning? He is ready for it; for he, and indeed he alone knows how to weep, *as if he wept not:* Does God call him to rejoicing? He is ready for it; for he, and he alone, can rejoice *as if he rejoiced not*, which is the fittest Posture and Carriage for each Condition, *1 Cor. 7. 30.* In a Word, he is fit to live, and fit to die; and let me tell you, that is a great Word, yet a true one, he is fit to die, ready in a good Measure for another World; 'tis a great Thing to die, and 'tis a great Attainment to be ready to die; and that that Soul is that is at Rest in God. I scarce know a more desirable Frame and Posture to die in than this of being at Rest in God: Now if it be a Frame of Soul, which thus renders a Man ready for every Call of God to him, surely it must then be an Excellent Frame.

3. To live at Rest in God is a safe Frame and Posture of Soul; a Frame and Posture of Soul, that secures a Man against Danger; and therefore an Excellent Frame. There is no Soul in the World so secure from Danger as he that is at Rest in God; such an one is set aloft, (as you have it) *Prov. 18. 10. The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous flee thereunto, and are safe;* or, (as the Word is) *are set aloft, set aloft above the Reach of Danger:* They flee to the Name, to the Nature, to the Attributes of God; they retire there, and rest there, and are secured against Danger: This is what guards and fences the Soul, and that against his grant Enemy, the Devil: 'Tis a great and sweet Scripture, that *Phil. 4. 7. The Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, shall keep, &c. shall guard or garrison your Hearts and Minds through Christ Jesus;* it shall fence and fortify you against Temptation; and indeed no Soul is so fenced and fortified against Temptation, as he
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that lives at Rest in God : Those Temptations which wound others, and lead them captive into Sin, cannot fasten upon him : A true Rest in God is a kind of Life-guard to the Soul, and no Guard like it in the World; it keeps Temptation from entering in, and it keeps Corruption from breaking out. 'Tis a sweet Exposition which one gives of that Place, *The Peace of God shall keep your Hearts and Minds, that is* (says he) *that Rest and Tranquility of Soul which the Faithful have in God, shall preserve their Hearts as with a Military Guard and Power, against the Temptations of Satan and the World, and it shall keep their Minds stable in Christ.* And to the same Purpose also Calvin upon the Place, *The Peace of God* (says he) *shall keep you, lest by wicked Thoughts or Desires you shall revolt from God.* O, my Beloved, there is scarce any thing gives the Devil and his Temptations greater Advantage against us, than a disturbed, restless, discomposed, Spirit: So much is evident from *Eph. 4. 26, 27.* *Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath, neither give Place unto the Devil.* Where is clearly intimated, that by an unquiet, disturbed, Spirit we give Place unto the Devil, and there is scarce any thing on the other Hand that so fences and fortifies the Soul against Satan and his Temptations, as an Holy Rest of Soul in God. The Saints in Heaven are out of all Danger, either of Sin or Temptation; and why so? Truly for this Reason among others, because there they are perfectly at Rest in God, they find that perfect Solace and Satisfaction in God, that they cannot possibly admit of Sin; nor have they the least Tendency to turn aside to any thing else. What shall I say? A Soul that is off his Rest, is off his Watch, and being off his Watch, he is in the Mouth of Danger; whereas 'tis quite otherwise with a Soul at Rest in God.

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4. To live at Rest in God is a very comfortable Frame and Posture of Soul, which is attended with much Spiritual Comfort and Communion with God; which also speaks the Excellency of it. A Soul living at Rest in God has usually the fullest Comforts, and the sweetest Communion, with God of any one this side Heaven: The Truth is, the Thing it self carries unexpressible Sweetness in it; besides God's Delight to manifest himself to those that live in the Exercise of it. God, you know, was in the *still Voice*, and there the Prophet found him: *He was not in the great and strong Wind, he was not in the Earthquake, he was not in the Fire; but he was in the still Voice,* 1 King. 19. 11, 12. The good Prophet had been off his Rest in God; he had been in a Passion, and under great Discomposure of Spirit, as you may see *Vers. 4.* and now God gives him this Vision of the Wind, the Earthquake, and the Fire, to let him see that that was not the Way to Communion with him; and so to caution him against Passion and all Discomposure of Spirit, which he was naturally very prone unto. O, God loves to dwell in, and meet with, a sedate, serene, composed, Spirit, a Spirit composed and at Rest in himself; and those that are so, are the Souls who usually have the clearest Sights, the sweetest Tastes, and the fullest Communications, of Love from him of all others; those are they who have the most close and constant Communion with him, who are most in his Bosom, and the Embraces of his everlasting Arms; who have most of his Spirit, his Presence, his Consolations, given to them: *Acquaint thy self with God, and be at Peace, so shall Good come unto thee,* Job 22. 21. *be at Peace*, to wit, in thine own Spirit, be of a sedate Mind, do not rave, do not rage, do not distemper and discompose thy self as thou hast done, but be quiet and sedate in thine own Soul: Well, but what shall I gain by it? Why, *thereby*

thereby Good shall come unto thee: And what Good? Not only outward, temporal, Good, but also spiritual Good, the Good of Grace, the Good of Divine Consolations, the Good of Communion with God, and the special Manifestations of his Love. O, the more a Man's Soul is at Rest in God, the more full will his Comforts, and the more intimate will his Communion with God, be: As for a restless, disturbed, Spirit, 'tis so like the Devil, (as by and by you will hear) that God cannot tell how to be much with it, nor yet to do much in a Way of Special Grace and Spiritual Comfort for it. Christians complain many times, that they have but little Communion with God, but little Experience of his Love and Presence with them; and one Reason, among others, why they have Cause so to complain, is, because they are no more at Rest in God: Were they more at Rest in him, he would rest more in his Love, his Grace, his Presence, with and upon them.

5. To live at Rest in God is a God-like Frame and Posture of Soul, which greatly resembles God, and is suitable to him, and which brings us up into the very Life and Blessedness of God himself; and what a choice Frame must it then needs be? The more Likeness and Resemblance any thing carries in it to God, and the more any thing brings us into the Life and Blessedness of God, the more excellent it is; now there is nothing does more resemble God, or is more suitable to him, nothing that brings us more up into the Life and Likeness of God, than to be thus at Rest in him in our own Souls; This indeed is the very Life and Perfection of God, the Posture (if I may so speak) which God himself lives in; for he is ever at Rest in himself, he is infinitely well pleased with what he himself does, and rests infinitely satisfied with his own Fulness and Excellencies: God is his

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own Rest, his own Centre; God is infinitely delighted with his own Will, and infinitely satisfied with his own Fulness, and so is at Rest in himself, which indeed is his Blessedness: Accordingly the more our Souls are at Rest in him, the more do we resemble him, and are brought into his Life and his Blessedness. A restless, unquiet, Spirit does above all things resemble the Devil, and is suitable to the Devil; 'tis indeed the very Life, Image, and Spirit, of the Devil; for the Devil is a restless, unquiet, Spirit, always acting in Opposition to God, and always fretting at the Dispensations of God: *He seeks Rest, but finds none, Mat. 12. 43.* As Wicked ones cannot rest, so neither can the Wicked one rest, but is perpetually disturbed: Now as a restless, unquiet, Spirit resembles the Devil, and is the very Life and Image of the Devil, so to be at Rest in God is what resembles God, and is the very Life of God in the Soul; 'tis what brings us up into the Divine Life, the Divine Blessedness; and O what an Excellent Frame must this be?

6. To live at Rest in God, is a God-honouring Frame and Posture of Soul; a Frame of Soul that does much honour God, and give Glory to him; and therefore must have much Worth and Excellency in it. Of all Frames, as well as Actions, that is the best that does honour and glorifie God most, and what Frame of Soul does more honour and glorifie God than this of being at Rest in him? This gives to God the Glory of his Sovereignty, and the Glory of his Sufficiency; Two of the brightest Jewels in the Crown of Heaven: It owns and acknowledges God to be both best and greatest, the highest Lord, and the chiefest Good, and so it glorifies God as God; it sets him up as God in the Soul, and gives him the Honour due unto his Name as such. Restless, disturbed, unquiet, Spirits do darken and obscure the Glory of God; they

they are *Censores Divinitatis*, (as one of the Antients speaks of them) they censure the Blessed God, and do in effect deny and disown the Sovereignty of God, the Wisdom of God, the Goodness, the Faithfulness, of God, the Fulness, Sufficiency, and Perfection, of the Holy One; they do in effect say that God's Will is not a Good, a Wise, and an Holy, Will, that there is not enough in God to satisfy Souls, and make them happy; and O what an Affront and Dishonour is this to the Majesty of Heaven? But now the Soul that is indeed at Rest in God, he gives him the Glory of all, he sets the Crown where it ought to be; and Oh how much does this speak out the Worth and Excellency of this Frame of Soul?

7. To live at Rest in God, is an Honoured and Highly Esteemed Frame and Posture of Soul, and that by God himself, a Frame and Posture of Soul, which God has a great Honour for, and puts a great Value upon; which also speaks the Excellency of it: There is scarce any Frame of Soul that God more values, honours, and delights in, than this of an Holy Rest in himself: This is *in the Sight of God of great Price*: Put on the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which in the Sight of God is of great Price: 1 Pet. 3. 4. In the Sight of Men, at least unholy and unspiritual Men, 'tis of little Price, of no Price, they despise and condemn it; but God has other Thoughts and other Values of it, he highly esteems and honours it, he looks on it as one of the choicest Ornaments, as one of the highest Excellencies of any Soul; now certainly that is best which God values and honours most: As that which honours God most, so that which God most honours, must have most of true Worth and Excellency in it. A restless, unquiet, Spirit on the one Hand, or a Spirit at Rest in the Creature on the other Hand, is what God abhors and despises.

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despises; but a Spirit at Rest in himself he highly values.

8. To live at Rest in God is a Heavenly Frame and Posture of Soul, a Frame and Posture of Soul which carries much of Heaven in it; 'tis indeed in a great Measure the Life of Heaven here on Earth; and what then more Excellent than this? Pray, my Beloved, what is Heaven, and the Life of Heaven, the Life which the Saints and Angels live in Heaven? Heaven is a State of Rest, Heb. 4. 9. and what is that Rest? True, there is an external Rest, there is a Rest from Labour and Trouble, from Conflict and Temptation; but the main of it is the inward Rest of the Soul, that Rest and Complacency which the Soul enjoys in God, and shall enjoy in him and with him for ever: There the Soul is filled with God, he is perfectly swallowed up in the Divine Will, being thorowly conformed thereunto, and he has the Perfect Vision and Fruition of the Divine Glory and Fulness, *seeing him as he is*, 1 Joh. 3. 2. And in both these he is filled with even an infinite Content and Satisfaction of Heart, this is the True Rest of Heaven: And what is the Life which the Saints and Angels live there? 'Tis a Life of perfect Rest and Solace in God, such Rest and Solace in God, as that they never think of going out to any thing else whatewer. *God is all in all to them*, 1 Cor. 15. 28. Thus to be at Rest in God is an Heavenly Frame and Posture of Soul; and Oh what an Excellent Frame must this be? Well then, lay all these Eight Things together, and you shall find an incomparable Worth and Excellency in it, which is a further Evidence of the Saint's Duty and Interest to live therein.

C H A P. V.

The Truth particularly improved. The Saints called upon to live thus at Rest in God. Arguments urged to induce them so to do.

WHat it is for the Soul to be at Rest in God, what Obligations the Saints are under to live at Rest in him, the Excellency of this Frame and Posture of Spirit, you have seen laid open before you; now what shall we say to these Things? O, that all who profess themselves to be Saints, or would be accounted so, would give all Diligence always to live thus at Rest in God. Possibly some of us are quite off our Centre, our Souls are full of Storms and Tempests, Tossings and Tumblings; they are not only *cast down*, but also *disquieted within us*, (as Holy David's sometimes was) *Psal. 42. 11.* Others of us perhaps are at Rest, but 'tis a sinful Rest, at Rest in the Creature, and not in God; at Rest in carnal, sensible, Things; we are of those who are *at Ease in Zion*; yea, perhaps we are even singing that mad *Requiem* to our Souls, that that Fool sometimes did, *Luke 12. 19. Soul, take thine Ease, eat, drink, and be merry, thou hast Goods laid up for thee for many Years:* But now this Truth, and the Things declared about it, do call upon the one and the other of us to return to God as our Rest, and to centre purely and entirely in him alone: This Truth calls off the one from all those unquiet Motions and Agitations that are within us, from all our Tossings and Tumblings, to an Holy Calm and Quiet of Heart in God; as it calls off the other from all our false Rests and Reposes, to an Holy Rest and Repose in God; and Oh that both the one and the other would hear and obey this Call, taking up our Rest in God alone. O, my Beloved! Are you under such Obligations to live at Rest in God as you are? And yet

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yet will you not live at Rest in him? On the other Hand, is the Frame and Posture of Soul so Excellent? And will you neglect it, and not study to be found always therein? Let me recapitulate a little particularly: Has God freely made over himself in all his Fulness and Riches, in his Covenant, to you, as your Rest and Portion for ever, and yet will you not live at Rest in him? Have you chosen God, and voucht him for your God and Portion, and yet will you not live at Rest in him? Is God so much (as you have heard) at Rest in you, and yet will you not live at Rest in him? Shall you, and do you, hope to live at Rest in God, and with God, for ever in Heaven, and yet will you not live at Rest in him here? O methinks these things should constrain you. On the other Hand, should not the Excellency of the Frame allure you? Would you live forth much of the Life and Power of Grace? Then live at Rest in God. Would you be ready for every Call of God to you, whether to do or to suffer, to live or to die? Then live at Rest in God. Would you be fenced and fortified against Temptation? Then live at Rest in God. Would you enjoy much Spiritual Comfort and Communion with God? Then live at Rest in God. Would you be like God? Would you resemble God, and grow up into his Life and Blessedness? Then live at Rest in God. Would you honour God? You have greatly dishonoured him; would you now honour him? Then live at Rest in him. Would you live in Heaven, and begin the Life of Heaven here on Earth? Then live at Rest in God. O why should we think of any other Rest but God? Or why should we live in any other Posture of Soul but this of a Rest in him? Is there any so sweet, so amiable, so becoming, as this? Oh let us labour, as near as possible, always to be found in this Posture. Blessed be God that we may rest in him: Two Things we should bless God for;

one is, that there is a Rest remaining for us in the other World; whether we find Rest here or no, yet there is a Rest to come, a Blessed Rest, *Heb. 4. 9.* The other is, that there is a Rest in God for us, and that we may enter into, and live in, that Rest even here; when there is no Rest to be had in this World's Enjoyments, no Rest in or from the Creature, yet then there is a Rest to be had in God, and from God, *We that have believed do enter into Rest, Heb. 4. 3.* there is a Rest in God, in the Will, the Presence, the Love, the Fulness of God, which we do or may enter into, even here in this World; and Blessed be God for this Rest, and this is the Rest which I am now calling you into. And yet a little further, to set home the Call upon you, consider a few Things.

1. Consider what a sad and dismal thing it is for a Soul to rest in any thing but God alone. A Rest, one or another, the Soul will have: If God be not its Rest, it will be taking up a Rest elsewhere: Now 'tis a sad and woful thing for a Soul to rest any where but in God alone. *Woe to them that are at Ease in Zion, (says the Prophet) Amos 6. 1.* Woe to them that are Quiet and at Rest in Zion; that is to say, that are at Rest in carnal sensual Things in Zion; so the Prophet afterwards explains himself; Woe to them that are at Rest in the Creatures, that take up their Solace and Satisfaction in Carnal Contentments, and not in God. To take up our Rest in the Creatures, and not in God, is for us to prefer the Creature before God, and to be content with the Creature without God, for our Portion and Happiness for ever: And, which is more, 'tis a dreadful Argument that a Man's All lyes in the Creature, and that God intends him nothing but the Creature for ever. *Woe unto you that are Rich, (says Christ) for you have received your Consolation, Luke 6. 24.* Woe unto you that are Rich, that is, you who rest in your Riches, (as

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The Soul's Rest in God:

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Calvin rightly expounds it) *who take up your Happiness in these things.* Woe unto you: And what Woe to them? Truly a most dreadful Woe; *You have received your Consolation,* (says Christ) you have all the Good you are ever like to have, you shall have no more and no other Happiness or Consolation for ever: Your resting in these Things argues these Things to be your All; and Oh, what a woful, dreadful, thing is it for a Man to have his All in this World, in a few, vain, empty, bitter, sweet, perishing, Vanities here! 'Twas a cutting, killing, Word which Abraham is brought in giving Dives, when he said, *Son, remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedst thy good things,* Luke 16. 25. He had all his Happiness in this World, which is the Woe and Misery of such as take up their Rest anywhere but in God alone: Tremble therefore at this.

2. Consider how impossible it is to find any true Rest, Solace, and Satisfaction, of Soul anywhere but in God and with God alone. You may as soon find Life in Death, or Light in Darkness, as Rest for your Souls anywhere but in God alone.

———Pray, Friends, where will you look, or whither will you go, to find Rest on this side God and Christ? Will you have Recourse to Sin? To your Lusts? To these Multitudes run; they pursue their Rest, Solace, and Satisfaction, from Sin, and the Pleasures of Sin; yea, (as Solomon speaks) *they rest not unless they sin,* unless they do evil: But, my Beloved, is there Rest to be found in Sin? Can that give Rest that is the greatest Evil in the World? Can that give Rest that is the Cause of all our Troubles and Difficulties? Can that give Rest that is the Cause of all the Confusions and Desolations that are in the World? Can that give Rest that was the first and only Cause and Founder of Hell? Had there been no Sin, there had been no

Hell. Can that give Rest that makes us like the Devil, that restless Spirit; yea, and that made him of a Glorious Angel a Devil? Can that give Rest that is infinitely contrary to God, that is the only Object of his Hatred, and that alone can and does separate between God, the chief Good, and our Souls? O, the Folly of Souls to pursue a Rest in Sin, in the Satisfaction of a Lust! True, a base, brutish, Pleasure and Delight wicked Men take in Sin, (as he said) *Will it not be Bitterness in the latter End? The Wages of Sin is Death, Rom. 6. ult.* Yea, and not only Death at last, but many times Anguish and Torment here. Will you have Recourse to the good Things of this World, to Creature-Comforts and Enjoyments, to Friends, Relations, Estate, and the like? These Thousands make their Rest practically, saying with him, *Luke 12. 19. Soul, take thine Ease, thou hast Goods laid up for thee for many Years: Thou hast a good Trade, a fair Estate, pleasant Enjoyments, take thine Ease, Soul, sit thou down at Rest: But, my Beloved, can these Things give Rest? Alas! 'tis the joint Language of all the Creatures to us, Rest and Happiness for your Souls is not to be found in us, seek it elsewhere, if you intend to find it: The Creatures (says a Worthy Divine) are not good, at least they are not the Soul's Good; nothing (says he) but an infinite Godhead can allay your Hunger after Happiness. Can Wind, can Vanity, can a Shadow, can a Fancy, can Things of Nought, Things that are not, Things that are even made up of Emptiness and Changeableness, give Rest? Such (you know) these Things are in Scripture represented to be. Could these Things have given Rest why had not Solomon found it in them? He had certainly the fullest Enjoyment of them that ever Man had, and not only so, but moreover he had Wisdom and Skill to extract the Sweetness of them, to improve*

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whatever they have in them ; yea, and he improved this Wisdom and Skill of his to the utmost ; for he set himself (as he tells us) to enjoy whatever the Creature could possibly afford, he gave himself up to a full Enjoyment of all : Well, but did he find Rest in them after all ? No, he was so far from finding Rest, that he cries out of all, *All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit* ; and this he does often, (you know) *All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit* ; and can *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit* give Rest ? What if a Man has an Affluence, an Abundance of these Things, and they are also increasing daily, will they not afford a Rest for him then ? No, *he that loveth Silver shall not be satisfied with Silver, nor he that loveth Abundance with Increase, this also is Vanity, Eccles. 5. 10.* Silver, Abundance, Increase, all is Vanity, and cannot give Rest. And, my Beloved, does not our Experience tell us the same Thing ? Alas, did we ever find any true Rest and Satisfaction of Soul in these Things ? True, we are apt to promise our selves Rest in this and that, in this Condition, and that Enjoyment ; but did we ever find that which we promised our selves ? Have we not always met with Disappointments ? We have dreamed of a Rest in these Things, but it has been but a Dream : It has been with us as 'tis in the Prophet *Isa. 29. 8.* *It shall be as when a hungry Man dreameth, and behold he eateth ; but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty ; or, as when a thirsty Man dreameth, and behold he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his Soul hath Appetite :* Just so 'tis, and it has been, with us, while we are or have been pursuing Rest, and promising our selves Rest in and from the Creature : Yea, and others of the Saints have experienced and asserted the same thing ; *All things (says Aug.) are full of Trouble and Difficulty ; thou alone, O God, art the true Rest.* And 'tis a great Speech of his, worthy

thy to be written upon the Table of our Hearts, speaking to Souls who are gone off from God: *Return, ye Prevaricators, (says he) to your selves, and cleave unto him that made you; stand with him, and ye shall stand; rest in him, and ye shall rest.* And again, says he, *Rest and Happiness is not to be found where you seek it; seek what you seek, but know that 'tis not to be found where you seek it. You seek a Blessed Life in the Region of Death, and 'tis not there; for how should a Blessed Life be found there where there is not so much as Life it self?* The Sum of all seems to be this, That those that desert God do go from the true Rest and Happiness of Souls; and to seek Rest and Happiness anywhere but in God and Christ, is to seek the Living among the Dead. Once more, will you have Recourse to your selves, and be your own Rest? Indeed we read that a good Man shall be satisfied from himself, Prov. 14. 14. but how from himself? From himself in Union and Communion with his God: From himself as in Communion with him that is the Chief Good, that has all Good in him, and not otherwise: And therefore observe, the Good Man here stands in Opposition to the Backslider, one that is gone off from God: Our selves, considered abstractly in themselves, are most insufficient to give Rest to the Soul, being most vain, changeable and deceitful. Every Man in his best State is altogether Vanity, Psal. 39. 5. 'Tis a great saying I have read in Bern. I have sought Rest (says he) in all things that are seen, but I could not find Rest in them; then returning to my self, I found I could not possibly subsist in my self, because my Mind is most light and vain. In nothing without, in nothing within, could he find any Rest, but in God alone. I'll close this Argument with a weighty Speech which I have read in a Worthy Divine of our own, Blessed Mr. Burroughs, who speaking of God's being the Rest and

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Portion of his People, speaks thus: 'Suppose (says he) that God should cause all the Kings and Emperors in the World to come and cast down their Crowns at the Foot of an Holy Soul, and say, All these are thine; he would answer, This is not enough, for this is not God himself: Suppose God should bring all the Splendors of all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, and they should be cast at the Foot of an Holy Soul as his, he would say, This is not enough, this is not God himself: Suppose God should cause all the Glory of Heaven, not only of Sun, Moon, and Stars, but also of the highest Heaven, abstracted from God, to be laid before an Holy Soul as his, he would say, This is not enough, this is not God himself: Once more, should all the Angels come, and say to an Holy Soul, We are sent to put all our Glory upon thee; he would say, This is not enough, for this is not God himself. O, nothing but God in Christ can give Rest to Souls.

3. Consider what a Blessed Rest God is for Souls; or that Souls may find in God. As there is an utter Impossibility of finding Rest anywhere but in God; so in him there is a Blessed Rest to be found for Souls, a full, a perfect, an eternal, Rest. O, my Beloved, what can your Souls desire, or what are they capable of, that is not to be found in God? Would you have Good? It must be Good that can give Rest to the Soul: God is Good, he is the Chief Good, the Best, the Highest, Good; he is Goodness it self, he is Good in himself, and he is the Spring and Fountain of all that Good that is in the Creature: He is so Good as that he is the Good of all Good; and nothing has any thing of Goodness in it, but as it resembles him, and participates of him. *There is none Good but One, that is God, Mat. 19. 17. He is God that made me, (says Aug.) and he is my Good, and in him do I exult and*

rejoice before all my other good Things whatever, and in all my other good Things. Would you have a full Good? Such a Good is God; there is a Fullness of all Good in him; *He that overcometh shall inherit all Things: How so? I will be his God.* I'll be his, and in having me he will have all in me, Rev. 21. 7. Whatever Good, Beauty, or Excellency, there is in the Creature, yea, in all the Creatures put together, 'tis all but a small Drop or Ray to that Good, Beauty, and Excellency, that is in God: 'Tis but a small Spark to the Ocean of the Divine Goodness. Lord, (says Austin) *all those Things which thou hast made are beautiful, but thou thyself art infinitely more beautiful.* God has all Kinds and all Degrees of Good in him: He is Light, and Life, and Love, and Peace, and Joy, and Holiness, and Salvation, and what not that Good is, or that conduces to the Happiness of Eternal Souls? Thou, Lord, art that Good, where no Good is wanting, (says Aug.) *and thou art always at Rest, because thou art thine own Rest.* That little Good that is found in the Creature is narrow, scanty, and but here and there a Drop: But God has all Good in a Blessed Union and Conjunction in him! O how Glorious a Rest may the Soul find in him! — Would you have a suitable and convenient Good? Such a Good is God, he is a suitable and convenient Good, a Good suitable to the Nature, Life, and Wants, of the Soul: Among all your Creature-Injoyments and Contentments there is nothing suitable either to the Nature or Life of the Soul: They are carnal, sensible, Things, and so are suitable to the Flesh and sensual Part, and are pleasing to it; but they have nothing suitable in the to an immortal Spirit, nothing that an eternal Soul can feed upon: The Body may as soon feed upon Air and Ashes, as the Soul upon Creatures. But now in God there is that Good that is every way suitable to the Soul, to the Nature,

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Nature, Life, and Wants, of the Soul: The Soul is of a Spiritual Nature, and God is of a Spiritual Good; *God is a Spirit, Joh. 4. 24.* The Soul is of a vast Capacity, 'tis next to Infiniteness in its Capacity and Desires; and God is a vast and comprehensive Good, having (as has been shewn) all Good in him: Without Suitableness in the Object to the Faculty there can be no Rest. — Would you have an original, independant, Good? Such a Good is God: *Waters drink most pleasantly at the Fountain-head:* In God you have all Good, all Sweet, all Comfort, at the Fountain-head. Hence he is said to be a *Fountain of Living Waters*, and the *Creatures broken Cisterns*, *Jer. 2. 13.* the Fountain has all in and from it self, but Cisterns, you know, have no more than is put into them; all that Good that is in God he has it in and from himself; but the Creatures, yea, the best of Creatures, Angels themselves not excepted, have no more than he puts into them: Now how much is the Fountain to be preferred before a Cistern? — Would you have a pure and an unmixed Good, Gold that has no Dross, Wine that has no Water, in it? Such a Good is God: *God is Light, and in him there is no Darkness at all, 1 Joh. 1. 5.* All Things on this side God have their Mixtures, they have a dark as well as a bright Side; all this Wine is mixt with Wormwood, this Gold with Dross: Who of us did ever meet with the Creature-Injoyment that had not many Allays? The sweetest Rose has its Prickles, and the rarest Beauty its Spots among the Creatures; but now God is every way a pure and an unmixed Good, he is all Light, Life, Love, Holiness, and the like. — Would you have a sweet and satisfying Good? Such a Good is God; yea, indeed there is infinite Sweetness and Satisfaction to be found in him; he can infinitely delight, ravish, solace, and satisfy, the Soul for ever. O how sweet, how satisfying, are the

the Sights of God, the Tastes and Descents of his Love! What an Heaven does one Sight of God, one Descent of his Love, make in the Soul! David casting his Eye upon God, as his in Covenant, is even ravished with it, and cries out, *The Lines are fallen to me in pleasant Places, I have a goodly Heritage*, Psal. 16. 5, 6. and elsewhere we read of *Pleasures*, of *Rivers of Pleasures*; of *Satisfaction*, of *Abundance of Satisfaction*, and all, as that which Souls do or may find in God, and Communion with God, Psal. 36. 8. and David over and over tells you of *Sweetness*, and *Satisfaction*, and *Satisfaction as with Marrow and Fatness* in but the very *Thoughts and Meditation of God*, Psal. 63. 5, 6. and Aug. (I remember) speaking of God, and to him, often breaks out into such Language as this, *O, my God, my Life, my Sweetness!* O, Sirs! Holy Souls, who live in Communion with God, will tell you, that there is no Sweetness like that in God, no Love like his Love, no Comforts like his Comforts: They will tell you, that one Sight of God, one sensible Token of his Presence in the Soul, has more Solace and Sweetness in it than all the Delights of this World; yea, than many Worlds; and they accordingly chuse and desire it. Oh how sweet is it to be led into the Banqueting-House by Christ, and there have the Banner of his Love displayed over us, and Flaggons of that Wine poured out unto us! How sweet is it to have one Sight of the King in his Beauty? How much more to walk and converse with him in his Galleries? How sweet is it with God in his Sanctuary, and have him revealing Himself, his Love, his Beauty, his Glory, to us? *O taste and see how good the Lord is!* Would you have a sure, eternal, and unchangeable, Good, a Good that never fades, fails, nor has any Period? Such a Good is God, and God alone: *From Everlasting to Everlasting he is God*, Psal. 90. 2. But this has been sufficiently spoken to elsewhere,

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Well, you see what a Blessed Rest God is for Souls. Why then should we ever think of looking out anywhere else for Rest? O wretched Hearts of ours, that will leave this God, and go out to a vain World and dying Creatures for Rest and Happiness! In a Word, if God has all that in him which thou needest, or art capable of, to give thee Rest and Happiness, then retire solely to him for it: Now what dost thou want? Or what art thou capable of to give thee Rest and Happiness? Dost thou want and desire Life? *With God is the Fountain of Life, Psal. 36. 9.* Dost thou want Peace? God is *the God of Peace, Rom. 16. 20.* and frequently elsewhere is he so called. Dost thou want Pardon? He is the God of Pardons, so the Words are in the *Psalms*, when he is said to be ready to forgive: And you know he has promised to pardon Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin, Sins of all Sorts and Sizes, all Degrees and Aggravations, if Souls come to him, *Heb. 8. 12.* Dost thou want Grace? He is *the God of all Grace, 1 Pet. 5. 10.* Dost thou want Comfort? He is *the God of all Consolation.* Dost thou want Mercy? He is *the Father of Mercies, 2 Cor. 1. 3.* Dost thou want Strength? Strength to do, to suffer, to live, to die? He is *the Lord Jehovah, with whom is everlasting Strength, Isa. 26. 4.* Dost thou want Joy? *In his Presence is Fulness of Joy, Psal. 16. 11.* Dost thou want Salvation? Salvation Temporal, Salvation Eternal? He is *the God of Salvation*, and as such the Church glories in him, *Psal. 68. 20.* Thus no Rest like that in God; Souls need not look elsewhere for Rest and Happiness, for there is all in God alone.

4. Consider what a restless World you live in, and what a troublesom Time you are fallen upon. The more restless this World is, and the more troublesom the Times are which we are fallen upon, the more we are concerned to take up our Rest in God: Now certainly the World was scarce ever more restless, nor the Times more trouble.

som, than now. In Zech. 1. 11. we read of a
 Time when the whole World was at Rest, except-
 ing only the Church of God ; but 'tis even quite
 contrary now ; for now the whole World, Church,
 and all, are in a restless, troubleſom, State. We
 ſee and hear of little but Wars, and Rumours of
 Wars, and as 'twas of old, *Deſtruction upon Deſtru-*
ction is cried ; and what and when the End of
 of theſe Things will be, who can tell ? In Jer. 16.
 5. we read that God had taken away his Peace
 from that People ; *I have taken away my Peace from*
this People, ſaith the Lord ; and truly now he ſeems
 to have taken away his Peace from the World. I'll
 leave only Two Scriptures with you, one out of
 the Old, and the other out of the New, Testa-
 ment ; both which I am apt to think may have a
 great Aſpect to the preſent Days, and may in a
 great Meaſure receive their Accompliſhment in
 them. One is, Zeph. 3. 8. *Wait ye upon me, ſaith*
the Lord, until the Day that I ariſe up to the Prey ;
for my Determination is to gather the Nations, that I
may aſſemble the Kingdoms, to pour out upon them mine
Indignation, even all my fierce Anger ; for all the
Earth ſhall be devoured with the Fire of my Jealouſie.
 The other is that, Luke 21. 25, 26. *There ſhall be*
Signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars,
(and theſe we have had) and upon the Earth Diſtreſs
of Nations, with Perplexity, the Sea and the Waves
roaring, Mens Hearts failing them for Fear, and for
looking after thoſe Things which are coming on the
Earth ; for the Powers of Heaven ſhall be ſhaken. I ſay
 nothing, only I fear, as we have ſeen ſome
 of theſe Things accompliſht, ſo there will be a more
 full Accompliſhment of them, and that e'er the
 preſent Generation paſſes away. Doubtleſs great
 Storms are a coming ; and happy they that have
 an Ark to hide themſelves in ; God has now great
 Works to do, he has the Kingdom of Antichriſt
 utterly to deſtroy, the Kingdom of his Son Chriſt

to set up in its Lustre and Glory, the final Redemption of his People to work out, his ancient Ones to call in, and his suffering Name, Attributes, and Glory, fully to right and Vindicate; and these Things are not like to be brought about without great Storms, Convulsions, and Concussions, in the World: Well, and what is the Language of all this to us? Verily this, Souls retire into God, take up your Rest in him, make him your All, both here and in Eternity: And Oh that we would do so! Then should we rest in the Day of Trouble. When Noah foresaw the Deluge a coming, he prepared him an Ark to the saving of both himself and Family, Heb. 11. 7. Surely he is blind indeed that does not see a Deluge coming upon the World, a Deluge of outward Troubles and Calamities: O why do we not enark in God, by making him/our Rest: This God invites his People unto, Isa. 26. 20. *Come, my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut thy Doors about thee; hide thy self, as it were, for a little Moment, until the Indignation be over-past: For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his Place to punish the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Iniquity.* What is it for God's People to enter in to their Chambers, and hide themselves, but to retire more into him, live at Rest and in Communion with him, to put themselves under his Protection, and the like? 'Tis for them to retire from the World and worldly Concerns, and to make him All, living and resting wholly in him, and upon him. O let this, viz. the Restlessness of the World you live in, draw your Souls into an Holy Rest in God.

5: Consider what Enemies you are to your own Souls, by not living at Rest in God. He that sinneth, ('tis said) *wrongeth his own Soul*; he that lives not at Rest in God, greatly sinneth, and thereby greatly wrongeth his own Soul. On the one Hand, you hereby deprive your Souls of much Good;

Good; and on the other Hand you expose your Souls to much Evil.

1. Hereby you deprive your Souls of much Good, yea, of much of the best Good. *Solomon* found this in Experience, and tells us, that pursuing Rest and Happiness in the Creature, and not in God, he did thereby bereave his Soul of Good, *Eccles. 4. 8.* and what Good? Verily the best Good, the Good of Grace, of Holiness, of Communion with God, of the Comforts of his Spirit, and the like: And Oh how much of this Good do you bereave your Souls of daily? This is that which hath bereaved you of much Grace, much Love, much Spiritual Comfort, many Embraces in the Arms and Bosom of Christ's Love: This (namely our pursuing Rest from the Creature, and not living at Rest in God) is that which hath made us so lean, so dead, so dry, so barren in our Spirits, as we are. O, my Beloved, while we have been off our Rest in God, and have taken up in other Things, what have we been doing, but feeding upon Husks and Swill, when we might have eaten Bread, and drunk Wine, in the Father's Kingdom? What have we been doing, but following after lying Vanities, to the forsaking of our own Mercies? Oh, did you know how sweet a Life it is to be at Rest in God, you would then know what Good you have bereaved your Souls of, by not living at Rest in him.

2. Hereby you expose your Souls to much Evil. I remember a Saying of *Austin*, *In this I sinned*, (says he) *that I sought my Happiness not in God, but in his Creatures, and so I rushed upon all manner of Dolours, Confusions, and Errors, of Soul*: And have not we done so? O the Wounds, the Confusions, the Errors, of Soul, which we have exposed our selves unto, while we have been off our Rest in God! Sin and Satan have made great Waste and Desolation upon our Spirits: And 'tis what exposes us to nothing but Sorrows, Snares, and Death:
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The Soul's Rest in God. 161

And as we would not wrong our Souls, let us retire to, and live at, Rest in God.

6. Consider that your living at Rest in God here will be a clear and unquestionable Evidence to you, that you shall live at Rest in God and with God for ever. O how sweet is it to have any one clear Evidence of living at Rest in God and with God in Heaven? And what would some of our Souls at some times give for such a Blessing? Yea, how sweet is a small Glimpse of Hope, a secret Whisper, an inward Hint or Intimation, of such a thing from the Spirit of God in our Soul? O, live at Rest in God here, and this will be a broad Evidence of it to you; and truly, unless you do live at Rest in him here, I know not how ever you will make it out to your Souls that you shall live at Rest in him and with him in the other World. In short, my Beloved, if we do indeed desire to live at Rest with God for ever in Heaven, why should we not desire to live at Rest in God here? Sure I am, the Thing is the same, and we shou'd desire the one as well as the other, and the one as the Evidence of the other. O, come, come, and be prevailed with by these Things, one and all, to take up the Rest of your Souls purely and solely in God!

C H A P. VI.

Several plain and proper Directions to Souls how to attain unto this Life of a Rest in God. With a Conclusion of the whole Matter.

TO live at Rest in God, that is a sweet, a blessed, Life indeed; but how may we attain to it? Our Souls would be at it, but how may we come up hereunto? A few Directions in that Case, and I'll close all.

1. Would you indeed live at Rest in God? Then despair of ever finding Rest anywhere but in him alone.

alone. As long as we have any Hopes of a Rest anywhere else, we will not so purely take up our Rest in God as we should; for woe and alas for us! *Our Heart is bent to backsliding from him,* Hos. 11. 7. We are carnal and sensual, and are addicted to carnal and sensual Things: As ever therefore you would live at Rest in God, utterly despair in your selves of ever finding Rest; yea, any thing of Rest anywhere else: The more we are driven out of the Creature, out of all our false Rests and Reposes, the nearer we are to an Holy Rest and Repose in God: It has been sufficiently evidenced and declared, that there is no true Rest for a Soul but in God alone, and you have both seen and heard it; but, my Beloved, 'tis one thing to hear this by the hearing of the Ear, and another thing for the Soul to come under the Sense and Power thereof, so as indeed to be dead in our Hopes to all other things, and practically to despair of Rest and Happiness anywhere but in God alone. Whatever we pretend or profess, at least the most of us, we still think that there is some Rest, some Happiness, in somewhat else besides God, and short of God; else what mean our eager Desires after other things, our Delights in them when enjoyed, our Grief and Sorrow of Heart when lost or wanting? What means the secret Bent and Byas of our Heart to stand off from God, and cleave to other Things, and the like? But all this must be rooted out, firmly fixing this Foundation-Principle in your Souls, that there is no Rest for a Soul but in God alone, and accordingly never have a Thought of looking elsewhere. And when at any time the Heart would be going out to other Things, check it with this Consideration, Rest; for the Soul is to be found only in God.

2. Would you indeed live at Rest in God? Then labour to know him much, and to know him in Christ.

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Christ. The more we know God, the more we shall love him; and the more we know and love him, the more shall we rest in him: *They that know thy Name* (says the Psalmist) *will trust in thee,* Psal. 9. 10. they will rest in thee, depend on thee: One great Reason why we do not rest in God, is, because we do not know him, at least so know him as to carry in us right Notions and Apprehensions of him: Labour therefore to know God more and better, labour to know him in Christ: God in Christ is most sweet, most lovely, most ravishing and solacing, to Souls; God in Christ is a God of Love, yea, a God that is Love: *God is Love,* (says St. John) 1 Joh. 4. 8. God in Christ is a God of Reconciliation; *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespases to them,* 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. and Oh how sweet is God thus known! God in Christ is *the Father of Mercies, the God of all Grace and Comfort,* 2 Cor. 1. 3. he is a full, free, open, Fountain of all Spiritual Good. In 2 Cor. 4. 6. we read of *the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God shining forth in the Face of Christ:* And indeed the Light and Glory of God, his Beauty, Sweetness, and Excellency, shines forth nowhere so Brightly and Illustrously as in Jesus Christ. To know God, or to look on him out of Christ, is what rather fills the Soul with Trouble, than brings it to Rest in him. *I remembred God, and was troubled,* (said he) Psal. 77. 3. God out of Christ is no other than an angry Judge, a consuming Fire, one that is ready to damn and destroy the Soul; but in Christ he is a God of Pardon, a God of Salvation, to all that come by Christ to him: Hence some of the Saints have profest that they durst not think of God out of Christ: And (you know) what *Luther's Thoughts* were by that Outcry of his; *I'll have nothing to do with an Absolute God.* O therefore labour to know

know God in Christ more ; being known in him, he is infinitely sweet to Souls, and they cannot but find that Sweetness in him that shall draw and allure them to make him their Rest and All for ever.

3. Would you indeed live at Rest in God ? Then labour to get your Covenant-Interest in, and Relation to, God cleared up to you. The clearer your Interest in God is to you, the fuller and more constant will your Rest in him be ; and indeed you will never so fully and sweetly acquiesce in God as you should, until you come to some good Sense of your Interest in him, and Relation to him in Christ and the Covenant: In 1 Sam. 30. 6. 'tis said, that *David encouraged his Heart in the Lord [his God ;] he saw God to be [his God,] and seeing him to be so, he encouraged himself in him, he sat down satisfied and at Rest in him, and that in the midst of many, great, and sore, Distresses, as you may there see : Had he not seen him to be his, I question whether he would have been able to sit down at Rest in him, as he did, especially in so great a Storm ? So the Church, Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul, therefore I'll hope in him : Seeing God to be her Portion, she could hope, trust, rest, in him, and that in a Case of great Calamity and Distress. I will not say a Soul cannot Rest in God without a Sense of his Interest in him ; no, 'tis the Soul's Duty to rest in God however things go with him ; though he be in the Dark, though God has withdrawn himself from the Soul, yet the Soul should trust in the Name of the Lord, and rest himself in his God, Isa. 50. 10. still there is that in God that is a full and proper Matter or Ground of Rest in him ; for he is as High, as Holy, as Wise, as Good, as All-sufficient, as ever he was ; and indeed we should learn to believe in the Dark : But though this be so, yet*

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still I say, the clearer your Interest in God is to you, the more fully and sweetly will you rest in him. The Sense of an Interest in God is what is most effectual to reduce a Soul to its Rest in God, when through Temptation it has been carried off from it: So we find, *Psal. 42. 11.* (which may be further opened afterwards) as ever therefore you would live purely and entirely at Rest in God, get your Interest in him, as your God and Father, cleared up to you; first chuse him for your God and Portion; and do it every Day; never rest till you can say, *Lord, whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee: My Heart and my flesh fail, but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever; Psal. 73. 25, 26.* Then pray hard for the Sealings and Witness of the Spirit; beg the Lord, with *Ananias*, to say unto thy Soul, *I am thy Salvation.*

4. Would you indeed live at Rest in God? Then meditate and contemplate him much, dwell much in the View of his Glorious Excellencies and Perfections: Deep and frequent Meditation of God and his Excellencies does marveously endear God unto Souls, and withal brings them into an Acquaintance with those satisfying Delights that are to be found in him, and so to a Rest in him. *My Soul, (says David) shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips, when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-watches, Psal. 63. 5, 6.* In *Vers. 3.* he is even ravished with the Sense and Incomes of God's Love to him: *Thy Loving-kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise thee; and here he speaks of Satisfaction, the sweetest Satisfaction, and all that which came in a Way of Holy Meditation; and again, my Meditation of thee shall be sweet, Psal. 104. 34.* Holy Meditation of God produces many sweet Experiences of God in the Soul,

Soul, Experiences of his Grace, of his Love, of his Sweetness, of the Blessedness of Communion with him, and the like; and these Experiences issue in the Soul's Rest in him: Every new Experience of God draws the Heart further into God, and makes it center more in him: Every Taste, every Sight, of God, every new Emanation of his Glory before the Soul, (of which in the Holy Meditation of God the Saints have not a few) weans and works the Heart off from carnal, sensible, things, and makes him to cleave more closely and entirely to God, gathering in about him as his All. O, be much in the Meditation of God: 'Tis not enough for us to know him, and to know him in Christ; no, nor to know him as ours, as our God in Covenant; but we must study him, we must meditate what a God he is, and single him out, now under one, and then under another, Notion or Consideration, to meditate upon, begging God to help us in our Meditations of him. The most know and enjoy little of God, because they meditate him so little, they are little in Holy Meditation.

5. Would you indeed be at Rest in God? Then improve all your Experiences of the Creatures Vanity, for the carrying of your Souls more into God, as your Rest and Centre. Holy David did so, and 'tis indeed a great Piece of a Christian's Skill. *Psal. 39. 7. And now, Lord, (says he) what wait I for? My Hope is in thee:* If you view either the foregoing or following Part of the Psalm, you will find that David was under great Experiences of the Creatures Vanity; he saw the Vanity of worldly Enjoyments, they are all but a vain Show; he saw his own Vanity, he saw the Vanity of others, he found every one, and every thing, nothing but Vanity; and what is the Issue? What Use does he make of it? This, he gathers in
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more to God as his only Rest and Happiness; Now, Lord, *what wait I for? My Hope is in thee;* q. d. Now I have done with the Creatures, I see what they are, and what all Persons and Things are, and I have done with all, thou thy self only, O Lord, art my Rest, my Happiness, my All. Thus when at any time you meet with fresh Experiences of the Creatures Vanity, improve them for the carrying of your Souls more in to God, as your Rest. You scarce live that Day wherein you do not meet with new Experiences of the Creatures Vanity; this is lost, and that is embittered, to you; now you meet with Disappointments, and then with Sorrows, Wounds, and Snares; and that, where it may be, you expected your Chief Comfort and Satisfaction; now in all such Cases what should we do? Retire the more into God, as our Rest and Happiness: Say with the Psalmist, *Now, Lord, what wait I for? My Hope is in thee;* I have done with the Streams, I'll cleave only to thee, the Fountain; the Creatures ever serve me thus, they leave me under Sorrows, Snares, and Disappointments; thou, Lord, shalt be all in all to me, thou art my only Rest for ever.

6. Would you indeed live at Rest in God? Then pray for much Spirituality of Heart, much Suitedness of Spirit to God and Christ. The more Spiritual you are, the more are you suited to the Blessed God, and the more you are suited to God, the more fully and genuinely will your Souls rest in him. I suppose you have a new Heart, (for I speak unto you as to Saints) the old Heart to be sure will never rest in God, the old Heart is wholly averse from God, and at Enmity with him, it hates him, 'tis wholly carnal, sensual, and unclean, and delights only in things suirable to it self: Let all therefore that would rest in God, first get a new Heart, such as God promises in his Covenant, Ezek. 36. 26. and having gotten a new Heart, pray
for

for much Spirituality of Heart and Affection. Alas! Alas! We are carnal, (as Paul charged his *Corinthians*) and being carnal, we lean to, and hanker after, carnal things, and till we get more Spirituality, we shall not rest so fully in God as we should; therefore pray unto God hard for more of this, pray for more of his Spirit to act and influence you; and not only so, but to change you more and more into the Divine Life and Image.

To conclude all; Live at Rest all that ever you can in God here, but withal look, and long, and hasten, to that Rest which remains for Saints with God in the other World: True Rest in God here is sweet; but we shall never be fully and perfectly Happy till we enter that future Rest: That indeed carries a compleat Happiness in it: O, to be wholly swallowed up in the Divine Will, the Divine Life, the Divine Fulness, the Ocean of Divine Love, to have every Faculty, and every Affection, perfectly suited to God, and filled with God, this cannot but be perfect Rest and Happiness; especially considering what an Enlargement there will be of all the Faculties, and how much of God they will then take in: But till we reach this Rest we cannot have any compleat Rest; therefore breathe and suspire after the future Rest, keep your Eye much there, and let your Eye affect your Heart; look and love, love and long, long and hasten to that Sweet, that Holy, that Heavenly, that Inviolable, that Unchangeable and Eternal, Rest which remains for Saints in God and with God in the other World, crying out, both in your Spirits and Lives, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen.

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